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Speeding toward gold in Torino
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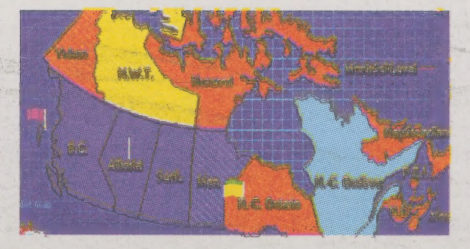

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Thursday, February 2, 2006 | The University of Victoria's Independent Newspaper | www.martlet.ca | Volume 58, Issue 20

AIDS: picture change

Page 3

V TONY HAUSER / PHOTOSENSITIVE SOURCE PHOTO

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Photo exhibit brings images of AIDS crisis to UVic

by Kate Webb

"It's okay to laugh," said Lucas Robinson, showing a photo of a young, giggling African child struggling to fit a condom over a large wooden penis. "Sex as a topic and HIV/AIDS can be a bit uncomfortable."

None of the small group of UVic students who had gathered to watch Robinson's Jan. 26 presentation did laugh. They were far too focused on the life and death reality running through the photograph.

Robinson, a communications manager for the Canadian Coalition on HIV/AIDS and Youth in Africa, was at UVic to give the presentation as part of a cross-Canada photo exhibit entitled "AIDS: Picture Change."

The exhibit is one initiative of a campaign to raise awareness about the AIDS pandemic in advance of the August 2006 XVI AIDS Conference in Toronto, and is a cooperative effort between international non-governmental organizations, CARE Canada, Save the Children Canada, Foster Parents Plan and World Vision Canada.

"Picture Change" hit the SUB Jan. 25 to 27, and featured photographs by PhotoSensitive, a group of leading Canadian photojournalists who decided to raise awareness by documenting the AIDS crisis.

Robinson visited Kenya, Mozambique, Ethiopia, India, and Cambodia in the spring of 2005 with the group of eight photographers, and said that interacting with the children was an uplifting experience. He remembers the sex-education lesson featured in the photograph as a comedic experience.

"It was hilarious at first and lots of people laughed," he said. "It's not easy to put a condom on a big wooden penis." By the end of the lesson, the stigma had worn off. "The youth were giving each other critiques of their ability to put the condom on," he said, laughing.

The photo was shown in a subgroup of the exhibit entitled "knowledge." Other categories represented in the exhibit included health, partnership, family, resilience, dignity, rights, and play.

"The goal is to interest people in the HIV/AIDS crisis through photography," said Robinson. "This project is awareness-raising, first and foremost."

The UVic event was hosted by campus groups Engineers Without Borders and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). WUSC's Ashley Heaslip repeatedly visited the exhibit in the SUB Upper Lounge during its run, and found it provoked strong emotions from students.

"I think images are very powerful, so regardless of a student's particular interests, when you see an image you relate to it," she said. "Almost all the students I saw looking at the photos were engaged with them."

One of Robinson's favourite photographs featured a little girl eating nutritionally fortified dried noodles, because he said basic nutrition is such an obstacle in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"HIV affects people who are ill already," he explained.

Another shot displayed a scene with a group of three young boys holding hands and laughing, one with his fly undone and another clearly doing what Robinson called the "pee-pee dance." This, to him, illustrated the universal applicability of the problems they face as children.

STEVE SIMON/PHOTOSENSITIVE PHOTO

In areas with high rates of HIV/AIDS, children are often responsible for the care of younger siblings.

"They're optimistic about the future," he explained. "They'll say 'I'm going to be a doctor when I grow up,' they don't say 'Oh, I'd like to.' They have the same belief we do—that you can do whatever you want to."

Although Robinson shares that sense of optimism, he also has an urgent sense of the need facing populations ravaged by HIV and AIDS.

"In some areas of sub-Saharan Africa, infection rates are as high as 30 per cent," he informed listeners. "The King of Swaziland has talked about the extinction of his people. We just have to act faster than we have been."

The problem, as he has seen himself, lies largely in a lack of education, and the prevalence of myths surrounding methods of protection from sexually transmitted diseases. He said many people in Third World countries believe condom use is futile because the manufacturers poke holes in their products, or that the condoms themselves are actually contaminated with the virus.

"Communities are so bright when given the resources, and so creative when given the opportunity to take on a challenge like this," he said. "I just think we're not giving them the opportunity."

The solution, Robinson said, will require an unprecedented response on the part of more developed countries.

"We [in Canada] have infection rates way below one per cent, and that's a clear indication that we know what to do," he said, citing the availability of fruit and protein sources to keep immune systems healthy, readily accessible testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and access to anti-retroviral drugs as the reason for low Western infection rates.

One remedy on the horizon is the development of microbicides, a gel that eliminates the HIV virus, similar to the way spermicide kills sperm. Women would be able to use the gel to protect themselves without their partners knowing about it.

However, researchers estimate microbicides are still five to seven years away from being available to the public.

"I'm optimistic that we're moving faster now than we ever have before, we're just not moving fast enough yet," Robinson said.

The entire "AIDS: Picture Change" exhibit is available for viewing online at www.picturechange.ca.

Upcoming WUSC events:

WUSC is holding its Western Canadian Regional Symposium on campus from Feb. 3 to 5. Students visiting from all over Alberta and B.C. will gather to discuss the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and the topic of ethical consumption. The price of admission is a voluntary $10 donation. For more information visit www.wuscuvic.ca.

University of Victoria Students' Society / Canadian Federation of Students Local 44

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3:00pm, CINECENTA

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF CHAIR
3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
   a. Agenda of 06/02/16 AGM
4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
   a. Minutes of 05/10/20 AGM
5. SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS
6. REPORTS
   a. Board of Directors Report
   Motion to adopt the report of the Board of Directors
   BIRT the February 2006 report of the Board of Directors be adopted as presented.
7. QUESTION PERIOD *(limit 30 minutes)*
8. OTHER BUSINESS
9. NOTICE OF MOTION
10. ANNOUNCEMENTS
11. ADJOURNMENT

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UVic indigenous scholar wins prestigious national award

by Briony Smith

The founding director of UVic's indigenous governance program and Canada Research Chair Dr. Taiaiake Alfred received a 2006 National Aboriginal Achievement Award on Friday, January 27.

Broadcast coast to coast on Global and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Networks, the annual awards, held this year at Vancouver's swank Queen Elizabeth Theatre, are handed out in 14 categories and celebrate achievement in the Aboriginal community.

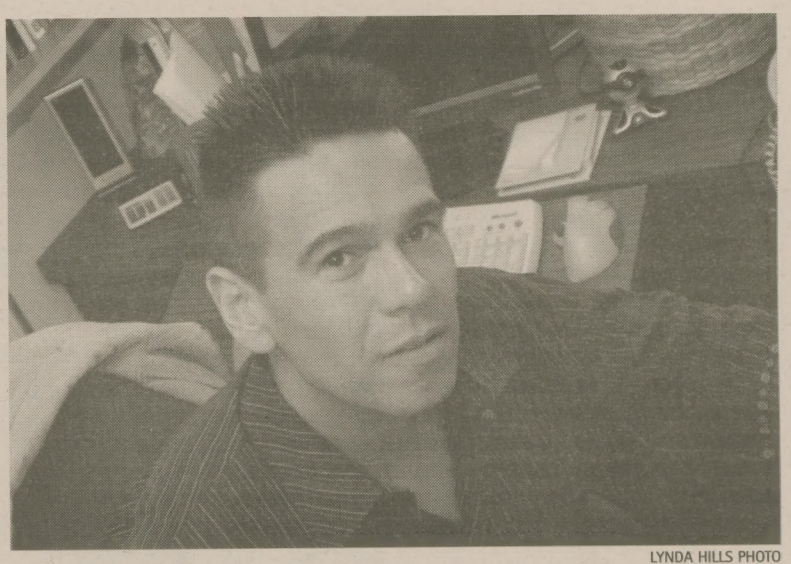
Alfred was nominated in the education category by former dean of UVic's faculty of human and social development Dr. Anita Molzahn for his work founding, teaching and researching with the indigenous governance program—the only one of its kind in Canada—and his writing. "These awards are pretty high-profile in the native community. Native people can look to the winners with a lot of respect as they put a lot of stock in the awards," said Alfred. "You can be a role model, and show society what people in native communities can achieve—it sends a real powerful message."

Alfred was raised in the Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) community of Kahnawake in Montreal.

"I was raised on a reserve in a pretty typical reserve upbringing with all the good and not-so-good things about being brought up on one in the '60s and '70s. I had a close-knit experience with my family, a culture that's harder to come by today—it was a small world. You knew everybody and everybody knew you." Alfred always felt the tug of the outside world and wanted to experience different things. This led him to join the Marines as soon as he turned 18 and to travel all over the world.

During his tour of duty, he saw many things but "didn't really understand them." He thought university would allow him to "learn more and understand why things were the way they were."

He graduated from Concordia University, before heading to New York's Cornell University for his master's degree and PhD. He said he was not always destined for indigenous studies—he started out in East Asian history. His passion for indigenous governance began with his working with a band council, after which he started exploring Indigenous governance more.



LYNDA HILLS PHOTO

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred was honoured for his work.

"Much wrong has been done to Native communities—like our land being taken away—and this needs to change. The only way to change anything is to change the minds of the younger generation of people," he said.

These ideas led Alfred to found the Master of Arts in indigenous governance program at UVic in 1998. It teaches students the values, perspectives, concepts and principles of Indigenous political cultures.

"I started the program because there was a real demand for leadership training instead of management training," he said. "Politics, law, and economics can affect decisions, but if we focus on young people and let them know what's right they can make decisions that make the world better.

This makes me pretty motivated to go to work in the morning and the response is there. I feel privileged to be able to have this influence."

Alfred continues his indigenous advocacy work through his three books on indigenous governance, including his most recent, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, which calls for a system based on indigenous traditions to replace the current approach to land claims and self-governance issues.

Local organization supports professionals with disabilities

by Matthew Gauk

A grassroots organization dedicated to addressing the needs of professionals with disabilities is spreading out across Canada from Victoria.

Paul Gilbert is the co-founder and vice-president of the Canadian Association of Professionals with Disabilities (CAPD). The group was formed two years ago in Victoria.

"Having a disability and being a professional, it just kind of came together," said Gilbert, who had been discussing with friends the problems that professionals with disabilities face in the workplace.

Gilbert cited a study by the Canadian Council on Social Development that found that over 30 per cent of male post-secondary graduates with disabilities and 40 per cent of their female counterparts were not employed in 1998, compared to just three per cent of male and 10 per cent of female post-secondary graduates without disabilities.

Gilbert said the unemployment rate among professionals with disabilities is roughly the same as it is among people with disabilities and no post-secondary education.

"There's a lack of education about that," said Gilbert, "and nobody has been representing professionals with disabilities."

Professionals with disabilities are often screened out through the hiring process, said Gilbert, but the government has shown an interest in alleviating this problem.

The CAPD had its first big event Jan. 30, a consultation for professionals with disabilities where they were invited to discuss in small groups the barriers they face in the workforce and to network to attain their goals. Gilbert hopes the meeting will spin off into a local affiliate of the national organization, designed to improve the chances of professionals with disabilities in Victoria. "The issue of localization is important," said Gilbert. "Each city is affected differently due to available resources and such."

This first workshop, which was attended by about 35 people, will be the first of many as CAPD members, including Gilbert, plan to travel across Canada in the coming months to host more events. Vancouver and Edmonton are next on the docket.

"We don't really have any choice—we have to grow," said Gilbert. "We've been getting calls from all over the world to set up other organizations—from Israel, from New Zealand."

Because the organization is grassroots and decentralized, CAPD affiliates in any Canadian city would be able to share information with affiliates in other cities. While different groups might not share the same situations, they would share similar ideas and goals and therefore be of service to each other, according to Gilbert.

The grassroots community level is where needs are actually met and it lets the organization be healthy and proactive, he said.

"The traditional organizational design for non-profit societies is a pyramid," said Gilbert. "But we're turning it upside down so that all the power is local."

For more information about the Canadian Association of Professionals with Disabilities, visit www.canadianprofessionals.org.

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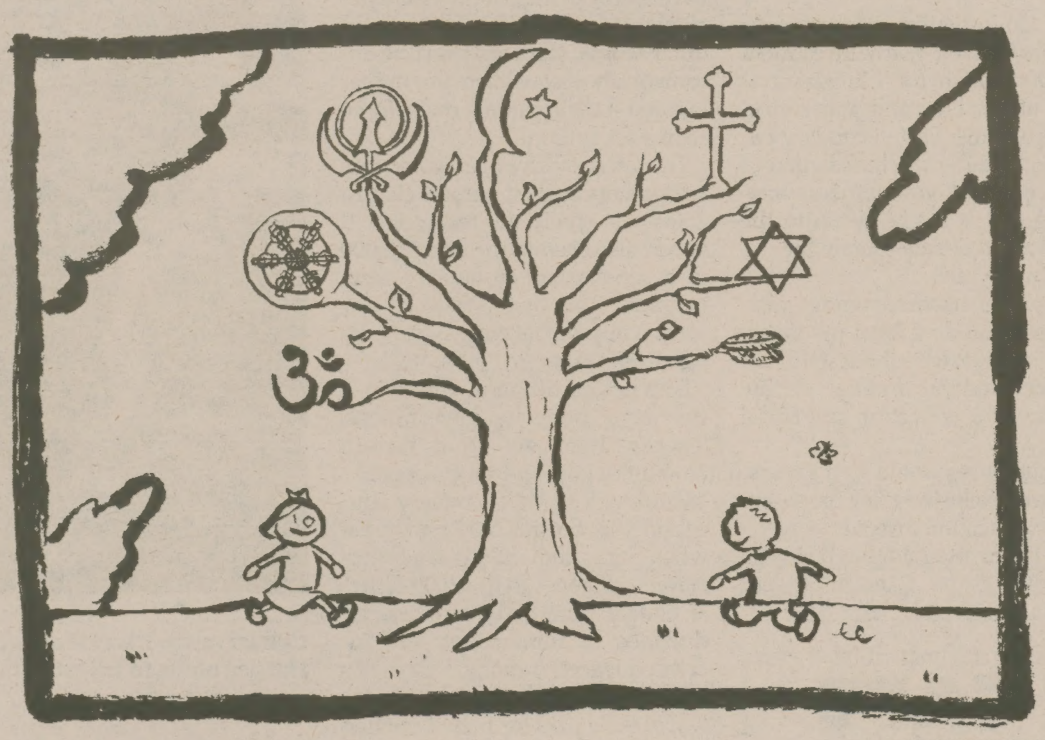
Six religious leaders share thoughts on suffering

UVic conference organized to bring faiths together, find commonalities and serve as an example of tolerance

by David Karp



ANTHONY FRATTAROLI GRAPHIC

There was prayer and song, questions and answers. But most of all, there was tolerance.

Leaders from six religious communities were on hand at UVic Jan. 29 for a World Religions Conference aiming to shed some spiritual light on the age-old question of how God and suffering can coexist. The event filled about two-thirds of the David Lam Auditorium in the MacLaurin building with a diverse but generally older crowd.

"It was a bunch of religious leaders getting together having a nice discussion," said Justin Kalef, a PhD student who has taught philosophy of religion at UVic in the past.

"If it wasn't meant to be philosophically interesting, then it was okay," he said, adding that he felt the speakers had trouble addressing the issue.

The event was organized by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and moderated by local news anchor Sophie Lui. Local politicians Christopher Causton and Rob Fleming introduced the conference before promptly leaving the four-hour event.

Farhan Khokhar, national secretary for communications for Ahmadiyya, said the event was organized to bring different faiths together, find commonalities between religions, and act as a model for other parts of the world.

The first speaker was Eshu Martin, a Buddhist monk and UVic chaplain. Martin was born into a Christian family in 1972. When he was nine years old, his mother suffered a stroke and was in a coma for weeks before she died. After the experience, Martin denounced Christianity.

"If there is a compassionate and loving God, how can He hear the prayers of children and not act?" Martin asked his UVic audience.

In Buddhism, there is no notion of self and no notion of God. Martin made the analogy that it was futile to compare individual waves, because ultimately they are all just parts of the ocean.

"Suffering is inevitable," Martin said. "The practice of Buddhism, then, is to wake up, to become aware, to harmonize our lives."

Like Martin, conference attendee Margaret Eby practiced Christianity before she lost her nephew to leukemia.

"They said, 'God meant for it to happen,' but I just couldn't believe that," she said after the conference. Eby said she was fascinated by Martin's message.

"Hopefully I'll get busy and learn a bit more about [Buddhism]."

Henri Lock, UVic's Christian chaplain, followed Martin's speech by providing the Christian view on God and suffering. He recalled when a student came into his office after the December 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, wondering how God could have allowed it to happen.

"I don't claim to have answers to these questions. Who does?" said Lock.

He went on to detail his own battle against cancer. "I realized through my ordeal that I was not alone," Lock said.

He pointed out that Jesus himself was born into suffering. "[Jesus] speaks powerfully to the suffering and existence of God," he said.

Dr. Suresh Basrur spoke about Hinduism. His religion believes every human has an Atma, or soul, which is part of the Brahma, or supreme being. According to Basrur, suffering occurs because the Atma and Brahma separate when the Atma becomes attracted to our material world.

"This world, according to Hinduism, is an illusion. It's not real," Basrur said. "The cause of human suffering is not God. It is the cause of this illusionary world."

Nassem Mahdi gave a presentation representing the viewpoint of Islam. "Whatever you see, it is under the mercy of God," he said. Mahdi argued that God intends for suffering to occur.

"If there was no suffering, there would have been no progress," said Mahdi, who said suffering has contributed to the survival of the fittest.

"Suffering does not negate the existence of God. Suffering proves the existence of God."

Rabbi Itzchak Marmostein spoke on Judaism, saying suffering is not God's fault.

"God wants us to end all human suffering," Marmostein said. "Each tear is God's tear."

He said God does not make bad things happen unless the solution to the problem already exists. "It is always there for us to find. The existence of God in the face of human suffering is the desire for good."

Marmostein concluded his speech with a song, engaging the audience with a piece from the Book of Psalms as he strummed his guitar.

Gian Singh Kotli presented the Sikh point of view. He said God gave humans intellect and free will, so that humans always have a choice to make.

"If I stick my finger in fire, God is not going to save my finger from burning. God is not going to change his law for me," he said.

Kotli also said God is everywhere. "Whatever we can perceive is a form of God," he said. "I am God. God lives in me. Everything good is a form of God."

Gaurav Sekhon, a grade nine student at Saint Michael's University School, saw a poster for the World Religions Conference and thought it might be interesting.

"I'm a Sikh personally, but I've been doing a lot of research about different religions for [social studies]," Sekhon said. "A lot of the stuff is similar. It makes sense."

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What the new Conservative government means for students

by Kerry Wall, *the Eyeopener*

TORONTO (CUP) — The election campaign has finally, mercifully, ended. And now comes the fun part: waiting to see how many campaign promises come true.

Prime Minister-designate Stephen Harper made many promises during this campaign; the Conservative election platform involved roughly $74 billion in tax cuts and spending.

And, like every party out there, the Conservatives put forward their solutions for a post-secondary education system that's been criticized for being costly, inefficient and disorganized. Here's what you can expect if Harper and his yet-to-be-appointed cabinet keep their campaign promises for post-secondary education.

Investment and overhaul

The Conservative election platform included a yearly investment of $100 million for Canada's colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs. Post-secondary education is under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, suggesting that it might be up to the provinces to decide exactly how to dish out the cash.

The platform would remove post-secondary funding from the Canada Social Transfer—the system that transfers federal money to the provinces for education and social services.

Conservatives would start a transfer fund exclusively for post-secondary education instead.

The Tories also said they'd change elements of the Canada Student Loans plan. Parental income would have less of an impact on a student's eligibility for financial assistance. In other words, students won't be automatically disqualified for monetary aid if their parents make more than a set amount.

The Conservative plan would also let students or their parents claim a $500 tax credit on textbooks. It would also exempt the first $10,000 of a scholarship or bursary from taxation. The first $3,000 of any scholarship or bursary is currently free from taxation.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves—this is a minority government. There's going to be a certain amount of give-and-take involved.

Funding for post-secondary education was on the NDP's wish list when it demanded—and received—changes to the 2005 Liberal budget. The party supports reductions to tuition fees and increased federal funding.

Starting in 2007, the Liberal plan would have paid for half of the first and final years of undergraduate studies up to a maximum of $3,000 each year, for every student.

Since the Conservatives will need the help of other parties to pass legislation, they may be hearing the other parties' ideas when budget time rolls around.

Prior to the election, the Canadian Federation of Students graded each party's platform with regard to post-secondary education. The Conservatives earned a C-, while the NDP scored an A-, and the Liberals received a B-.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister-designate Stephen Harper plans to invest $100 million in Canadian post-secondary education yearly.

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Couple takes on '100-Mile Diet'

by Ben Bisset

For some people, dieting means cutting back on McDonald's and getting off the couch.

For Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon, however, it means radically changing their entire approach to food. The couple hasn't eaten anything produced more than 100 miles (approximately 160 kilometres) from their home in Vancouver since March of last year.

Their plan, known simply as the "100-Mile Diet," was inspired by a desire to reduce green house gas emissions: ingredients for an average North American meal typically travel thousands of miles from their point of production. By eating locally, Smith and MacKinnon hope to cut down on the vast amount of carbon dioxide that is spewed into the air daily.

Smith and MacKinnon, who could not be reached for interview, aren't alone either. They're part of a larger movement that emphasizes eating locally grown food.

Greg Awai is the director of the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG), the sponsor of an upcoming talk featuring the pair in Victoria. He said eating locally, besides having environmental significance, is also important for economic reasons. An increased demand for locally-grown food helps Vancouver Island farmers who often struggle to compete against larger corporate farms.

"If there's a market for local products then there's more of a likelihood that people will be able to afford to farm," said Awai. "There are a lot of problems with land prices being pretty incredible around here because of development. But there are a lot of people that are farming and people that want to farm."

More importantly, he said, eating locally reduces Vancouver Island's dependence on imported food. While self-sustainability might be impractical, over-dependence is not necessarily a good thing either.

According to Awai, Vancouver Island "might produce 10 per cent of our food, if we're lucky." The rest of it is shipped in from the mainland and elsewhere.

"In the event that there was some kind of emergency, we only have a three-day supply of food on the island [in grocery stores]," said Awai.

Supporting local farmers also encourages the growth of community bonds, Awai said.

"You get a closer connection with your community and with your food if you know the people who grow it. It builds tighter communities."

Yet Awai is also quick to admit that eating locally is not currently a viable option on a large, international scale.

"We don't have the capacity for everyone to switch over to eating locally right now, regardless," he said. "One hundred miles would be incredibly difficult for everyone." Under current conditions, it would be impossible to produce enough of certain foods to sustain consumption levels. "Grains, for example—we just don't have the capacity to grow that sort of food within 100 miles of a large city."

Cost is also a concern. Although increased demand for local food might eventually drive prices down, buying locally grown products remains somewhat of a luxury for some, especially if it is done on a daily basis.

"There are definitely some issues with affordability. Obviously, locally produced food can be quite expensive," Awai said. "It can be more expensive because wages are often higher here and living costs are higher here, so I would say the expense of producing food here is higher."

Still, Awai is confident about the future of both the 100-Mile Diet and eating locally in general.

"I see a lot of potential; I think there are a lot of people who are interested in . . . supporting the local economy and reducing their impact on the environment."

WESLEY SCOTT PHOTO

Local groups are spreading awareness of the fact that 90 per cent of the food on Victoria grocery store shelves is imported from off-island.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Hundred-Mile Diet: James MacKinnon and a Focus on Local Food

Join former Monday Magazine editor James MacKinnon as he discusses his experiences eating a "hundred-mile diet" of locally produced food over the past year. Ray Zimmerman of the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt Society will also be making a presentation about the Agricultural Land Reserve in the Capital Region, how it's changed, and why we need to protect our agricultural land. Following these presentations there will be an audience discussion on the state of local agriculture in the South Island and Gulf Islands region.

When: Thursday, Feb. 2 at 7 p.m.
Where: St. Anne's Academy Auditorium, 835 Humboldt St. (access off Blanshard).
Admission is free.
For more info, call 721-8629 or 472-5170.

The Oil We Eat: Local Food, The University and Climate Change

The UVic Sustainability Project has invited the public to a local food dinner with speakers from the university and non-profit communities, exploring the relationship between the food we eat and the landscape in which we learn. Topics addressed will include the question of how the constant flow of food transportation to Vancouver Island impacts climate change.

When: Saturday, Feb. 4, 7 to 9 p.m.
Where: Solstice Cafe, 529 Pandora Ave.
Admission is free.
For more info, call 721-7355

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AHMED MUMENI PHOTO

UVic's Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Working Group has been fighting for indigenous rights since September of last year, raising funds and awareness wherever they can.

Indigenous and non-indigenous students work in solidarity

by Jessica Smith

They joke that they are going to be labelled "eco-terrorists" on campus but UVic's Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Working Group is all about moral and financial support for indigenous peoples.

Their discussions range in topic from proper canning techniques to disbanding the Canadian government.

The Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Working Group (IPSWG) is a campus organization that began last September as "a space to learn more about indigenous issues and our responsibilities as non-indigenous people—about whose territory we live on and related issues," explained member Joanne Cuffe at a Jan. 25 meeting.

The "eco-terrorist" comment followed a discussion about information IPSWG handed out in the SUB–an anti-capitalist graphic-art leaflet that promotes "low-intensity conflict" and rebellion to defend Indigenous peoples' rights and the environment.

IPSWG handed out the leaflet as part of their current project—fundraising and consciousness raising for a reoccupation camp at Sutikalh, a disputed territory in the Cayoosh Mountain Range between Pemberton and Lillooet traditionally inhabited by the St'at'imc. The area has been approved for development into a $500 million ski resort by Nancy Greene-Raine Inc.

"It's a beautiful place," said Marianne, a guest speaker at the Wednesday night meeting who only wanted to be identified by her first name. "You can drink the water out of the stream. The snow, northern lights, you can see animals, shooting stars. It's a special spot. When I go up there I don't ever want to leave."

Life at the camp isn't always peaceful, though. "Some would say living there is very beautiful," said Marianne.

"But sure, people have been shot at camp, the information booth was burnt down. I guess there's times when it's a stressful place to live. It's not really a war-zone, it's a blockade."

Sutikalh residents have seen some of their buildings burned down and shot at by hunters, and seven of their members were arrested by the RCMP following a blockade of Hwy. 99 in 2001. The camp residents accuse the RCMP of assaulting one of their members during the incident. But Marianne still feels the reoccupation has been worth it.

"So far it's been a success already," she said. The camp at Sutikalh was erected in 2000 and has so far prevented development in the area. "It's really well-known in Indigenous communities all over the world," she said, "and I think if the Nancy Greene-Raine corporation, if they go up there to start building, there'll be quite the show of protest."

IPSWG has been handing out information about the disputed territory and selling T-shirts on campus for $25 each to raise money for the camp. IPSWG's members are mostly non-indigenous Canadians, and a few members explained what their solidarity means.

"I've always thought support is support—I don't care if you're purple or green as long as you're on my team," said group member Melaina Sheldon.

"We're acting as a support group for indigenous people and their ideas of how they want to deal with the government, rather than acting on our individual ideas of the government, or whether we want the government to exist at all," explained another member, Sean McMillen.

Carl, another guest speaker who asked that his last name not be used, explained why he is involved with groups like IPSWG. "It's nice to meet people that don't feel that they're Canadian, they live in this territory called Canada, it's a colony, but they're not Canadians," he said.

"For me what it comes down to is that in my life I need freedom, I need to be free. In a colonized situation like Canada, the first step to take to deal with the land and the people of the land is to go to the reserve, go to the blockades and meet people who are fighting for their culture and their land. It's empowering first of all . . . for people who are not Canadian, don't feel a part of this structure, which I don't feel a part of."

Carl also has a vision of the future that many IPSWG members nodded in agreement with. "One day I would like to see a whole bunch of free autonomous communities in the landscape that we call Canada now," he said. "Communities that are autonomous, that are independent, that are diverse—how people were here before. Now we have this big homogenous money machine called Canada. It's nice to support people who are getting in the way of this money project, Canada."

For more information about the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Working Group, e-mail solidarity@vipirg.ca

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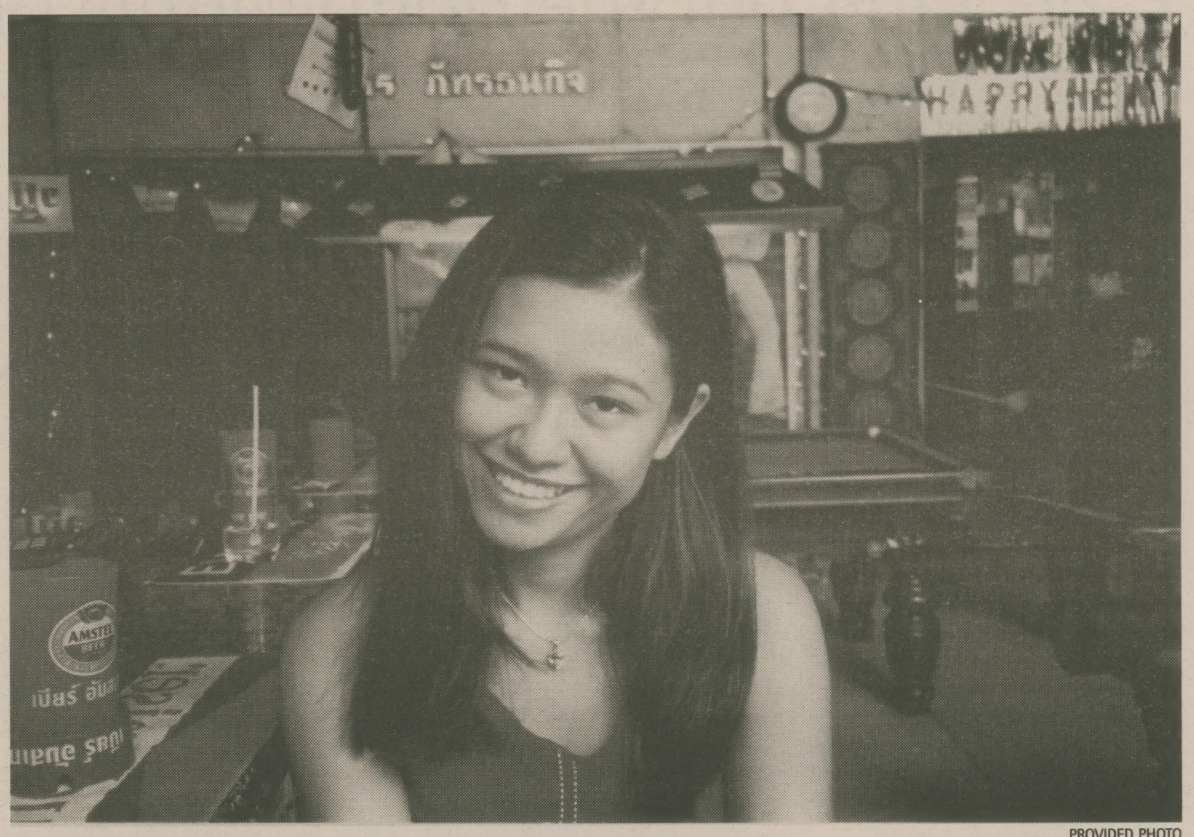
Exposing Thailand's darker side

Filmmaker Jordan Clark on his love for a *Bangkok Girl*

by Kate Webb



PROVIDED PHOTO

Pla, the subject of Jordan Clark's *Bangkok Girl*.

The first time Jordan Clark ventured to Thailand, he saw what most Western travellers see—a backpacker's paradise punctuated by smiling merchants and unparalleled bargains.

Knowing little about the country at the time, Clark said what he remembers most from the trip were the exotic feasts, friendly people and pristine beaches.

"The first experience I was really naive and fairly oblivious to what was going on," he said. "The tourist trail is so thick there it's really hard to experience Thailand outside the tourist triangle."

That was six years ago, and since then Clark has returned to see a far different side of Thailand. Armed with a semi-professional quality video camera, the 33 year old set out in 2002 to make a film about the strange and fascinating world he remembered.

Instead, he fell platonically in love with a 19-year-old bar girl named Pla, and immediately knew he had to tell her story instead.

"The film was supposed to be about the tourist trail," said Clark, "but I met Pla and she ended up being the sculptor of the film."

The documentary that emerged from the filmmaker's three-month adventure turned out to be a hard look at the human cost of the Thai sex trade.

Over 800,000 girls and women currently work Thailand's night scene in order to survive, and Clark said he made it his mission as soon as he met Pla to put a face to an industry that is often normalized. This proved no easy feat.

"Everybody's trying to make a living, so it's a little more difficult to really get to know people," he said. "It's 'How do you get people to break through that separation? How do you get people to break through that barrier?' My intention was to do that by getting people to get to know Pla."

Pla, as it turned out, was on the cusp of entering the sex trade industry when Clark met her. She had worked as a bar girl at a pickup joint for westerners from the age of 13, and managed to live off the meagre wages she made pouring drinks, but when her mother fell ill she had no choice but to sell her body to help pay for medical expenses.

Unaware of the direction Pla's life was taking when he began to film her, the story Clark ultimately told was shaped by the heartbreak he felt at seeing the girl he saw as a sister slip away into the night scene.

"In that society, if you're a bar girl . . . you're no better than a beggar on the street with leprosy," he said.

Clark tried to help Pla financially, and even attempted to get her out of the country, but because he was engaged at the time, there was no legal avenue open to him.

A week after leaving Thailand, he learned that Pla had died, possibly of heart failure related to a drug overdose.

This startling revelation concluded his film, and Clark slipped into a heavy depression. He said he has to take responsibility for what happened to Pla, but feels he at least was able to give his friend a voice.

"The only way to solve any problem in the world is through understanding," he said.

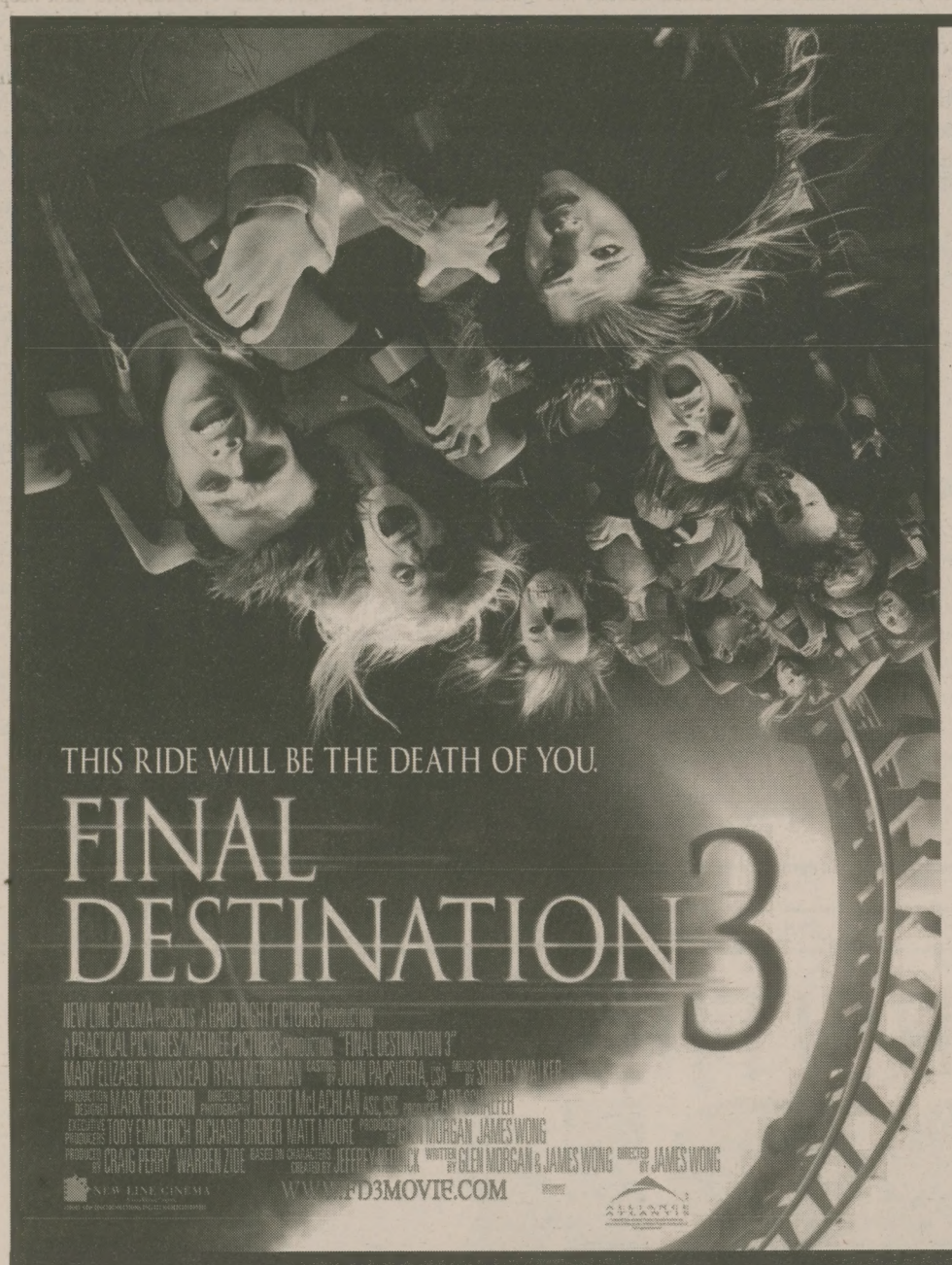
Clark's film, *Bangkok Girl*, was shown at the 2005 Victoria Film Festival, and aired for the first time on CBC's Rough Cuts Nov. 15, and again on Jan. 21. The film attracted the show's second-highest ratings in the last two years.

Clark said he learned many lessons from Pla while visiting Thailand—most importantly patience, compassion, and understanding. He does not condemn those who participate in the Thai sex trade because so many men and women there are dependent on it, but wants to pass on what he has learned to future generations of western travelers.

"The one thing I can say is if you're traveling through Thailand and you see a westerner doing something or acting in a way that's inappropriate, do something," he said. "Being in a foreign country doesn't give you license to act like a jackass. I mean, have fun, but [remember] you're dealing with people who are trying to feed their families."

Ultimately, Clark hopes Pla's death has a lasting impact on Western audiences, and that it contributes to saving Thai women some of the pain they regularly endure to stay alive.

"I would personally like to see the amount of tolerance for sexual predators in Thailand disappear," he said, "but my goal for the film was to make people fall in love with Pla and to be affected by her death, and to generate dialogue after the fact so that hopefully there would be less tolerance of abuse."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MARTLET DOES . . . TORONTO

Checking out the bright lights of Toronto

Want to leave Victoria for Reading Break? Check out big city life in Toronto.

by Bryna Hallam

PROVIDED PHOTO

If you haven't seen the CN Tower, you haven't been to Toronto.

How to get there

It's a long trip by anything other than plane, but there are options. Greyhound and VIA Rail both hit Toronto. The bus is cheap but takes FOREVER. The train offers great scenery but is pricey. See www.greyhound.ca and www.viarail.ca for more info.

Prices on flights can vary greatly depending on when you book, when you're going and which airline you fly with. I've paid as little as $450 (return, including taxes) up to $800.

Where to stay

To keep your wallet happy, head for a hostel. Toronto has a number to choose from $14 to $30 per night.

One good choice is **Global Village Backpackers** (460 King St. West) near plenty of restaurants, close to shopping, and steps away from transit—all of which make it a good choice.

They also offer a number of tour packages and free wireless Internet if you happen to be lugging your laptop around. See www.globalbackpackers.com for prices and location, and to book.

Getting around

Toronto's **TTC** transit system makes getting around easy. There are 138 bus routes, 11 streetcars, three subways and a Rapid Transit Line (the Go Train). Fare is $2.50 and transfers are only good for the next available transit on direct routes only. In other words, it's like Victoria: no stopovers or return trips allowed.

What to do

Check out www.toronto.com, www.toronto.ca, and www.tourismtoronto.com for an overview of what the city has to offer. And once you're there, pick up a copy of ***the Eye Weekly*** and ***Now Magazine***, Toronto's two alt-weeklies for current listings.

If there's just one thing you're going to see while in Toronto, it might as well be the **CN Tower**. This "wonder of the modern world" (their words, not mine) is the world's tallest free-standing building. If heights don't bother you, go to the glass floor, an impressive 342 metres above ground.

While you're at it, you might as well have some **street meat**, fresh from one of the many hot dog vendors that dot the city's streets.

The Royal Ontario Museum (100 Queen's Park) has new galleries featuring the art and archaeology of China, Japan, Korea and Canada's First Peoples.

Entrance is $12 with student ID. You can get in free at 3:30 p.m. Saturday through Thursday and after 4:30 p.m. on Friday. See www.rom.on.ca for info.

If the stage is more your thing, check out **The Lord of the Rings** (www.lotr.com), opening Feb. 4 at the Princess of Wales Theatre. It's not cheap, but if you're a Tolkien fan, or just mad for hobbits, it's worth the splurge.

Toronto is also home to **The Second City** (51 Mercer St.), which performs topical comedy sketch-theatre satirizing aspects of everyday life. Mike Myers, John Candy and Eugene Levy have all graced the stage here.

See www.secondcity.com for showtimes and prices.

Looking to shop? Toronto has a lot to offer.

Bordered by College Street to the north and Dundas Street to the south, **Kensingston Market** is a haven of fresh fruit, vegetables and dry goods stores.

It's also home to some great secondhand and vintage shops. Check out **Courage My Love** (14 Kensington Ave.) for one-of-a-kind pieces and quality vintage clothes and jewelry.

Cool shops can also be found on **Bloor Street**. A stroll down the street offers everything from lingerie to books.

Toronto is also home to a handful of major sports teams: the **Blue Jays** (www.bluejays.com), the **Maple Leafs** (www.mapleleafs.com) and the **Argonauts** (www.argonauts.on.ca). Check out their sites for info on who's playing when, and how much it's going to set you back.

AURAL AFFAIRS

New Year, new love

by Jake Sandberg

Whether you believe it's just a fabrication of lust, or your soul expressing itself, everyone wants to find love. If you don't believe me just check out one of the many ever growing online dating websites like Match.com or Lavalife. I guarantee you will find someone you know!

But the point of this column isn't to promote online dating—it's to help all of you out there who need that extra push.

Seeing as this is the first article, it's only reasonable to discuss the first step: finding love. Well, for starters, you can NOT stick to your routine. Sitting on the couch won't get you anywhere.

Clubs, intramurals, the library, going to class, and being nice are all you should need. Join a club or an intramural team—at the very least you'll get some exercise. Choose something that is interactive and likely to contain members of the sex you're interested in. My recommendations: ultimate Frisbee and ballroom dancing.

The library is an amazing place to find people. Books too for that matter, but they charge you if you take too long with them. So the next time you sit next to someone with the same textbook as you, I think you should feel obligated to ask them how the course is going. It's a great line to get the ball rolling and it leads into many other excellent conversational items such as "Which section are you in?", "What did you think of the midterm?", and possibly even "If you're around tomorrow, would you like to compare your assignment with me?" Words of caution though, if you use the last one, don't show up unless you actually do the assignment or you're going to look like a dumb ass. And no one likes a dumb ass!

Go to class and sit next to someone new. This is the easiest thing you can do! Steer away from the usual group and try sitting next to a stranger. "Is this seat taken?" is all it takes. If you're a little shy, then the next time you take a bathroom break, ask the person to watch your stuff. When you get back, you can thank them and start a conversation that way. For those who were paying attention, this last one works really well in the library too!

The fact of the matter is that this place is loaded with singles your age with, assuming they complete all four years, respectable career prospects. So don't waste your days bitching or crying about love. Get out there and speak to a stranger. It's easy, you just need to think of something nice to say. There's a good chance they are looking too.

Next week: A Day for Bad Boyfriends to Shine . . .

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PROVIDED IMAGE

***World of Warcraft* issued a warning to a queer-friendly group.**

Don't ask, don't tell

Game's policy 'protects' against homophobes

by Bryna Hallam

Sara Andrews thought it was a mistake when she got a message of admonishment from Blizzard Entertainment's game masters.

Andrews had been recruiting for her queer-friendly guild (a group of players who play together) in the popular *World of Warcraft* (WoW) game. Her use of "GLBT" (gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans) got her cited for "Harassment - Sexual Orientation." They let her off with a warning, instead of the suspension standard in such cases.

Blizzard's policy on "Harassment - Sexual Orientation," which is set forth in the games' "Terms of Use" and cited in the e-mail to Andrews reads, "This category includes both clear and masked language which insultingly refers to any aspect of sexual orientation pertaining to themselves or other players."

Andews understandably felt that using "GLBT" wasn't insulting and told Blizzard as much.

They replied, writing in part "we do feel that the advertisement of a 'GLBT friendly' guild is very likely to result in harassment for players that may not have existed otherwise." You see, they were doing it to protect her and others from all the homophobic people out there. It's for her own good.

But WoW doesn't do a good job with its policy at the best of times. With 5.5 million players on multiple servers, it's hard to keep track of who is saying what. That's why they rely on gamers to report harassment and violations of their terms of use.

That means only things that get reported get dealt with. Which means while someone reported Andrews, apparently no one reports the frequent appearance of "fag" and "gay" in the game's online chat. Phrases like "That's so gay!" and "What a fag!" are common—so common, in fact, that it seems Blizzard must not know about them.

But some players claim they have reported homophobic language, only to be told by Blizzard to ignore such comments.

It seems that Blizzard wants to keep all those homophobic/ignorant paying customers happy by disregarding—and thus condoning—their bad behaviour.

It's a stance they're bound to pay for in the end.

ADVOCACY COLUMN | ACCESS UVIC!

Let's talk about it

by Rose Mariana Robb

Quick. Which is correct? A talented person or a person with a talent? A disabled person or a person with a disability? The rich, or rich people, or people with riches? The disabled, disabled people, or people with disabilities?

Do we need a reminder that people with disabilities are still, well, people, and not just disabilities? I hope not. For some years "people first" language around disability was officially promoted, especially in Canada. Today, both "disabled person" and "person with a disability" are commonly used in disability studies and the disability movement, internationally. At Access UVic, I hear students refer to themselves both ways. I personally prefer disabled but will use both terms interchangeably in this weekly column.

I understand, though, how words can burn. I won't ever forget the words I heard when I first told a teacher that my daughter had a severe learning disability. "Disability, yuck. I hate that word!" Funny how people lose their cool when confronted with disability.

But at least she was honest. Of course she hates that word. It's a highly stigmatized word.

So is disabled. It doesn't matter whether it's used as a noun or an adjective. We try to disguise it or move it around a little, like a hot potato in our sentence structure. But that's not a solution. What we really need to do is address the stigma.

I have another reason for preferring disabled. Unlike the euphemistic "differently abled" or the godforsaken "special needs," disabled is hard to gloss over and ignore.

And it's easier to see that one might be disabled by negative attitudes, or by the design of an instructional or architectural environment. Or disabled by the inadequacies of a post secondary institution, to bring it back to UVic. Lots of us are disabled. Let's deal with it.

For me, "person with a disability" conjures up a disability separate from the person, like a suitcase you carry around. (Incidentally, why don't you park the damn thing somewhere—and quit inconveniencing the rest of us.) It is clearly your baggage and you should deal with it. Meanwhile, in reality, you need other people to work with you, even work with you a lot, to remove barriers to your participation.

In the recent election campaign, the Liberals pointed to their plan for a national disability strategy, and the NDP's Jack Layton promised to push for their Canadians with Disabilities Act. Both have well developed policies. The Conservatives were silent on plans around disability, except to say that they had Steven Fletcher.

In June, 2004, the arrival of newly elected Conservative MP Steven Fletcher in Ottawa precipitated a flurry of renovations to Parliament to accommodate his wheelchair and attendant. Good action beats good policy in my books.

Fletcher is paralyzed from the neck down as a result of a car accident when he was 23. His riding is in Winnipeg, home to the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, the Canadian Centre for Disability Studies, and the world headquarters of Disabled Peoples' International.

The new Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, might not have good disability policy yet, but he has a colleague who embodies the possibility of greater independence, dignity and inclusion for all Canadians. Congratulations.

Rose Mariana Robb is the Director of Access UVic! Access UVic's Disability Advocacy Centre is located on the main floor of the Student Union Building, room B102. They can be reached at 472-438 or access@uvss.uvic.ca.

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MARTLET

Tony's Trailers
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Between the lines

Canada's literacy problems hide in plain sight

by Jessica Smith

The doctor's scrawl on a prescription pad is gibberish to most Canadians. So are the pharmaceutical names of medications. But imagine you can't read the instructions on your medicine bottle, or the street signs on the drive to the doctor's office—and there's nothing wrong with your sight.

Fifteen per cent of adult Canadians can't read and understand most printed information, according to the 2003 Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL). One of the easiest tests administered by the ALL survey asked people to determine how many days to take a medication based on the information on its label. Four million Canadians had difficulties. These Canadians are "level ones" on the prose literacy scale, according to most literacy organizations.

"In [level] one, most people can read some words—their name and three-letter words, like 'mom' and 'dad'—words that are important to them. But that's about it," says Helen Thomas, who has been teaching adult basic education at the Victoria READ Society.

Another 27 per cent of Canadians are in level two.

"[Level] two," Thomas says, "is about how someone might be expected to read in Grade 4, just beyond the primaries."

"It's not an easy process to read a newspaper for a lot of people," she says. Newspapers are written at a junior high school reading level.

"People can hide it, and they can hide it very well," Thomas says. "For people with a learning disability especially, they may have an excellent vocabulary, better than the average, but they can't read or write.... They're the people who are going to say that they've forgotten their glasses, so they can take the form and do it at home."

The Victoria READ Society is one of the few places offering adult basic education classes in the Victoria area. Another is the William Head minimum-security prison, a federal prison on the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

While 19 per cent of adult Canadians have a Grade 9 education or less, that percentage more than doubles for inmates in Canadian federal prisons. According to a report on literacy to the House of Commons in 2003, 46 per cent of inmates have a Grade 9 education or less.

The report also estimates that as many as 75 per cent of inmates would have "low literacy skills" if tested using the same scale as literacy studies such as the ALL—more than 30 percentage points higher than the number of Canadians with low literacy skills in the ALL study.

Brenda Vidal, the adult education teacher at William Head, explains this discrepancy.

"Somebody with low literacy is less likely to have a decent job, and is more likely to find other ways to make money. And they can lack the reasoning skills to deal with an alcohol or drug addiction. Or possibly, with problems in their family or home life to begin with, they just don't ever get a decent education growing up."

Vidal makes a case arguing that educating children in the school system is cheaper than sending people to jail.

"If we spend more money looking after the students who are having difficulty when they're in the school system, it will lower their probability of getting here," she says.

"The most efficient way to spend money would be to spend it on children, especially those with disabilities and difficulties when they're in the school system. Then maybe they wouldn't end up searching for their answers elsewhere."

Stephen Reid, an author, literacy activist and inmate at William Head, co-edits *Out of Bounds*, a literary prison magazine. He says finding people with literacy problems, getting them to own up to it, and then remedying the problem is difficult. They feel vulnerable and fear being labelled illiterate, he says.

"There's enough isolation in here without the isolation of illiteracy."

"If you can hear me, touch your nose. If you can hear me, touch your toes. If you can hear me, put your hands in your lap."

Some of the students stop talking and put their hands in their laps; others continue crawling on desks and under chairs, talking and laughing.

Port Renfrew Elementary is the only school in a town of 200 people on the west coast of Vancouver Island, two hours north of Victoria where Sooke Road meets the ocean. This year there are 21 students, ranging from kindergarten to Grade 5, in the two-room school.

In one room, teacher Hammond Domenchelli reads a picture book about spiders to a group of 17 kids between the ages of five and 10. He is trying to keep them quiet and seated.

Most of the kids are interested in the book. Questions like "What are stilts?" and "What's preening?" are asked every page. Sometimes the kids answer each other's questions, sometimes Domenchelli does.

"Well, how do you think spiders smell with their legs?" he asks, redirecting their attention to the book. "Let's see, maybe the book will tell us."

In the other classroom, Anne So is multitasking. She does prep—going through students' work and organizing classroom resources, while keeping an eye on the younger students with attention spans who have wan away from the story to put together zles and play Connect Four.

"I'd say at least half of them are gling readers," she says. "They nee tra assistance with reading and w and spelling. That goes from still to learn letters and letter recogniti kids who can decode words, but h hard time understanding what t reading."

So estimates that only a quarter students read at home with thei ents.

"Some parents have indicated past that they do also have reading culties, or have had reading diffi in school," she says. "So, if it's been cult for them, it's possible that tho ficulties get passed on to their kids

At READ, Thomas has seen firs how literacy problems can be p down through families. She says be a parent's sense of shame at thei perceived inadequacies that en hurting their own children.

"They might have an attitude a education, because it's hard to ad your child that you don't know h read or write, and it's hard to them, 'I can't help you with this when you could just say to them, isn't my job,' or, 'It's not important

Thomas thinks that with a littl and effort—and proper funding cycles of literacy problems can b ken.

Thomas has found that learning culties are often responsible for l eracy skills. She knows that peopl learning problems can learn to write and do math with a high deg skill, if they get the intensive one-o help they need.

She is an advocate of teaching grams like Reading Recovery, a m developed in New Zealand. "Stud the bottom 10 per cent are suppo get one-on-one help, half an hour for six weeks," Thomas explains that takes them often from being bottom ten percent to being aver their group."

The problem is, she explained even the most dedicated teachers have the resources and time to p that kind of help to all of the st who could benefit from it.

"There may be someone in th who never puts up their hand," T says, "but a teacher can't spen much time with them when the 30 other students."

"What would help?" asks So, her full of laminated words for the wall," her eyes on the student cr on the floor. "More time and hands."

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Adult-education students at the Victoria READ Society write about literacy:

by Gered Lee Mickelow
People need to learn how to read because it's important. I think that readers are more helpful with directions and important decisions to lead us through the right path. When I'm a magnificent reader and writer, I'll become a lawyer.

by anonymous
To know how to read and write is an essential in our lives for so many different reasons. To me, surviving was very important because I immigrated to Canada and I never went to school to learn. Later I found out that without having any knowledge and skills, it feels like you are blind. So literacy is life.

by Zea
Literacy is hard. Every day it's a fight to read, write or just do math. Once you know how, it makes things better for you so you can survive each day. You will find that self-esteem will come to you as you learn. People who don't have a literacy problem don't understand what it's like to live with such a problem.

by anonymous
Literacy to me means freedom and independence. Without the ability to read and/or write, one might feel lost. People who can't read or write, a lot of the time hide it and live their life, but they don't live life to the fullest. It's kind of like jumping into a swimming pool and not being able to swim. On the same note, once you learn you never forget and you only get better with practice.

by Sarah Bremner
I came to READ to have balance in life and to look forward to reading a book. I would like to have the power to get a good job and make good money. I want to be able to give my son a good life and all the opportunities I never had. Coming to READ has been a huge stepping stone for me. When I leave READ, I am going into practical nursing. I would not be able to do this if literacy was not important to me.

by Wicheruk
If you didn't have the proper literacy skills, you wouldn't be able to express how you feel or what you think to another person. To have all these ideas floating around in your head, and to not be able to put them on paper, is very frustrating.

To survive and get around in the world, we have to have a good understanding of the things around us. Understanding what we should and shouldn't do. To understand what people are asking of us, doing a certain task the right and safe way. It's all about understanding and doing.

Jobs require you to use some or more numeracy skills. Whether you're a programmer compiling codes, or a cashier counting and calculating money, you need to know your way around the numbers.

by Crystal Gallagher
Literacy is important to me now because I have a child that I love to read to, and one day I will need to help her with her homework. It's also important to me so that I have confidence, independence to do things on my own, enjoy a book, be well spoken, and understand things and people better. Most important, I want to have the opportunity for a good job and better life for my family and me.

Inmates at William Head minimum-security prison speak about literacy:

"Education in general, I wish I would have gotten it more at a younger age, instead of now. But I guess you're younger, and in high school, you don't really realize that education is important in the future. You don't realize it until 10 years later, that high school is important. You're busy, hanging out with your friend or skipping off school. I realize that education is important if you want to get a good job that makes good money, that you're not physically hurting yourself. You need an education, unless you want to get a job that's physically demanding."

-Mike Pye

"I came here from the Mountain Institution and I am glad to be back here again. The school is very good here. The teachers are good. And I like to go to school. I like learning. I like books. I'm a bookworm. I have three children out there who speak only English, so I want to be able to communicate with them. Therefore I thought it would be a good thing if I learn more of English. Since I'm reading so much, I know that education is important and should be provided here in prison because people with education make better decisions."

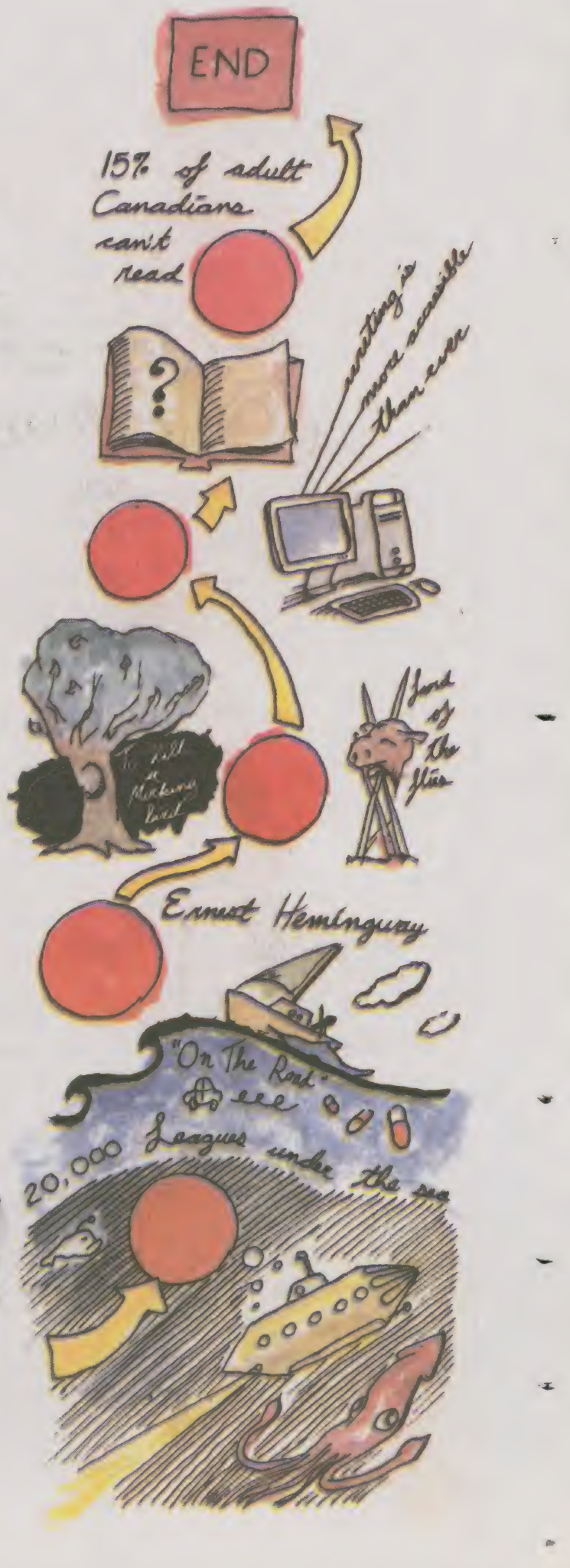
-Bernd Böhnke

"I just, I hate reading. I don't feel that it's a waste of time, but I just rather spend my time doing something that will help with my carpentry training."

-Chris Dion

"My education is pretty well done and I'm looking to do some kind of cooking courses on the street. It's been awhile—drugs and alcohol—and it took over my life for 15 years, and I didn't do a whole lot of reading and writing then, you know . . . I grew up working in the bush my whole life. Due to medical reasons now, that's not something I'm going to be able to do when I get out. I'm in the situation where I wish I would have stayed in school when I was younger. Cause now I'm paying for it. I really do find that I'm paying for it. . . . Personally I find the educational system here is great. It is not my first time in this institution. I was here when it was a medium-security [prison]. I did fairly well in here. We have access to Brenda, and she helps us out a lot. I find the program's benefiting me. This is one of the reasons I was sent to this institution. If you're in the federal system, this is the best education in the region."

-Bill Dixon



Editorial

We love democracy—but only if we approve of the results

The recent election in Palestine had interesting results, at least from the point of view of everyone else.

The Fatah party— which had dominated Palestinian politics for decades under Yasser Arafat and then Mahmoud Abbas—was expected to once again form the government. Even the exit polls suggested they were headed for a win.

Then the Hamas party won 76 of 132 seats and the West sounded the alarm.

The Hamas victory immediately raised concerns about the prospects for peace in the Middle East. The group includes in its charter a commitment to the destruction of Israel and has carried out dozens of suicide attacks against Israelis in the past five years.

Israel, the United States and the European Union have all listed Hamas as a terrorist organization, and all are refusing to deal with the new Palestinian government unless they change their stance and their violent ways.

Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act also lists Hamas as an organization associated with terrorism. Prime Minister-designate Stephen Harper has suggested that his Conservative government won't accept Hamas as long as it continues to support terrorism and call for the destruction of Israel.

It isn't necessarily the case that Palestinians were voting for Hamas because of their stance on Israel. There's more to Hamas than destruction and suicide bombings. It also operates mosques, schools, clinics, and a number of social programs.

And Fatah wasn't exactly all bread and roses either: the previous government was plagued by allegations of corruption, and there is a history of attacks against Israel in their party as well.

The recent election had been delayed since 1996. People were anxious to vote, and apparently they were also also anxious for a change.

So what we have here is a population tired of their previous government, a population who that has waited 10 years to cast their ballots. They made their decision.

But instead of supporting their decision, and the ideals of democracy, the West is refusing to deal with the new government.

Countries are so resolute in their displeasure with Palestine that they're threatening to cut off funding unless Hamas changes its tune. Aid money from the European Union and the United States currently totals $1 billion US.

They have their reasons to be upset by the election results, and that's fine. But it's unlikely that the reaction of the West is going to convince any other countries to give democracy a go.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

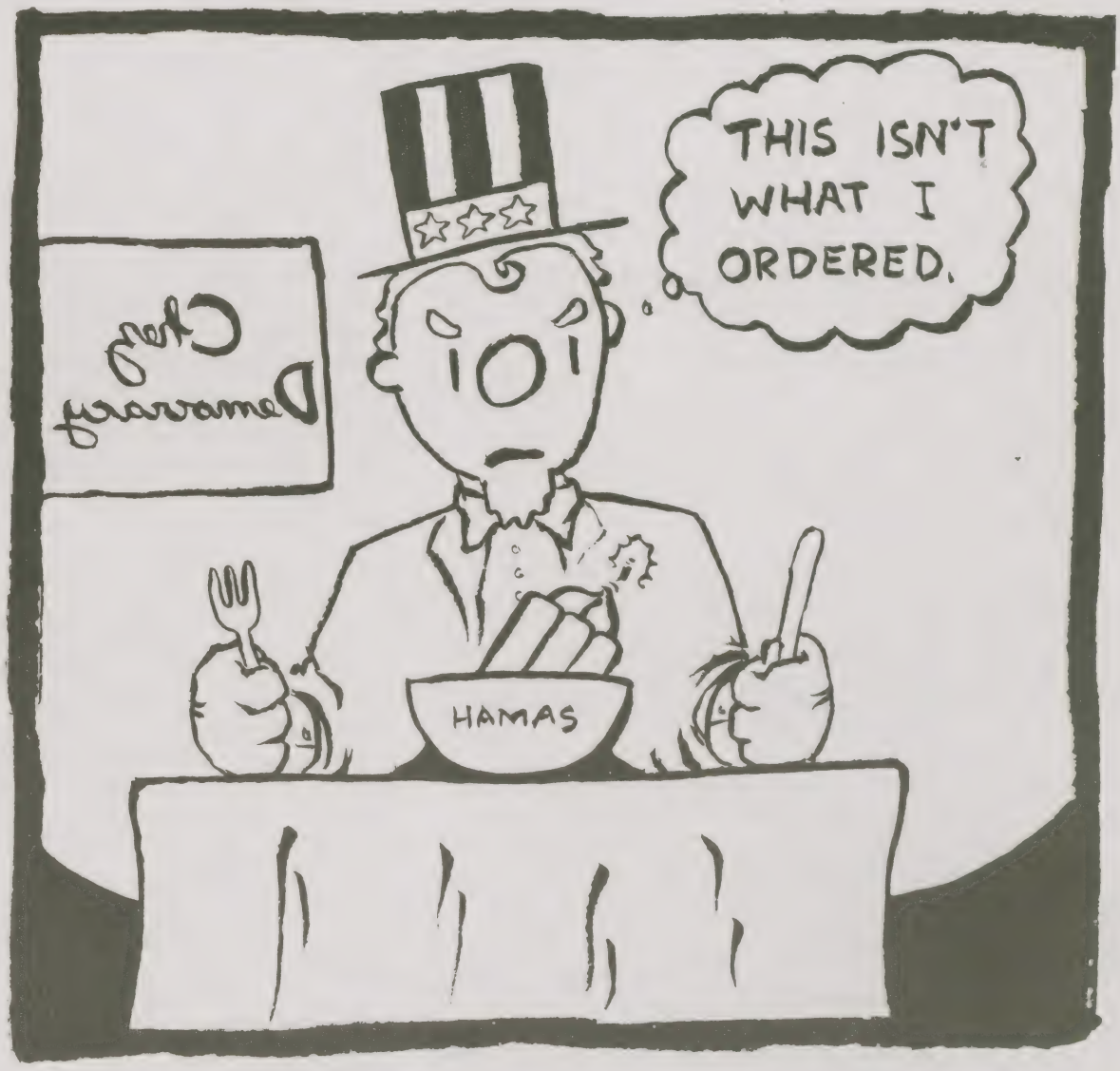
edit@martlet.ca

THUMBS UP | THUMBS DOWN

Thumbs Up
To Quebec for initializing a mixed voting system that will combine proportional representation with the popular vote. Imagine, the part of the country that's politics receives the most scrutiny considering a progressive change before any other province.

Thumbs Down
To Blizzard Entertainment for claiming it was protecting players of one of its online games from harassment by forbidding them to openly recruit for a queer-friendly group of players. Trust us, it's for your own good. Now get back in the closet.

EDITORIAL CARTOON | MORE THAN THEY CAN CHEW



ANTHONY FRATTAROLI GRAPHIC

LETTERS

Bald-faced lies are no good

"I think there's a sense, particularly among teenagers, that everybody smokes marijuana, that it's acceptable to do so, and that there are few consequences," said Dr. Joy Johnson. "I don't think we've been very clear in our messages to teenagers."

This is obviously true. We, as adults, have been bald-faced lying to kids about marijuana for decades, and they know it. Adults have lost all credibility when it comes to drugs because we have told kids that pot will cause cancer and stupidity and schizophrenia and impotence. These claims are not based in any scientific fact, and when kids find out that we lied about pot, they will be far more likely to think we are lying about meth, crack, heroin, safe driving, and safe sex. Once bitten, twice shy, as they say.

Johnson continues: "The evidence is a bit mixed as to whether or not smoking pot causes cancer".

The evidence is not mixed, it is fairly conclusive. In 5000 years of recorded history, not one case of lung or throat cancer has ever been diagnosed in a cannabis-only smoker. Furthermore, the medicines in cannabis have shown (in recent studies from Spain) to have cancer-fighting properties.

For a simple, fact-based approach to teaching kids about drugs without all of the hyperbole and dogma, check out the Educators For Sensible Drug Policy website at efsdp.org.

-Russell Barth

The danger of religious politics

I take issue with David Karp's view that more religion in politics could be a good thing, and his implication that we might take our cue from our neighbor south of the border.

Religious teachings can ground tolerance for the ways of others; but historically they have tended to foster intolerance. And a secular outlook is wholly compatible with set principles—such as the liberal-democratic principle that church and state should be kept separate, or the principle that public policy should be based on rational standards of evidence.

What Mr. Karp ends up defending is blind faith in one's own righteousness.

While it's laughable to think that George Bush's actions are based on the ethical teachings of Christ, they are based partly on the belief that the destiny and policies of the United States are providentially overseen by the Christian God. A substantial American voting bloc that helped get him elected believes that Jesus Christ will return within the next fifty years, and that only true believers (comprised mainly of Christian Americans and some Jewish converts) will be saved.

Following on this belief, it makes little sense in principle to worry about the destruction of the environment or any escalation of holy warfare.

-Michael Nowlin

Misleading fast facts

Regarding the Jan 26 story, "UVic student killed by hit and run driver", your use of fast facts on helmets at the end of the article implies that a helmet could save a life or mitigate injury in a collision with a motor vehicle.

Bicycle helmets are not designed to afford that level of protection and no manufacturer would ever make such a claim. Helmet standards and testing are based on a 6 ft vertical drop to the head, such as a child might experience falling off a bike. This is why in most jurisdictions that have helmet laws, the laws usually apply only to children.

Of course BC is the exception and our helmet law has been effective in diverting attention from real cycling-safety issues—lack of funding for cycling infrastructure, poor air quality on the roads and especially from the mainland junkers that can't pass air-care there. Other issues that need to be looked at are the competency of motor vehicle operators and the need for a universal retesting program, and wasting police resources on helmet enforcement rather than addressing careless or impaired motor vehicle operation.

I do credit you in addressing the visibility issue—being seen is essential for cyclist survival in our damp, foggy climate, especially now, when gas prices are so high that motorists can't afford to defog their windows.

-Bill Wilson

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Then tell us. Write letters to the *Martlet.*

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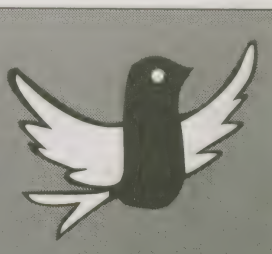

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Less talk, more funding

Homeless Week draws attention to a growing problem

by Melanie Greene

When I turn 18, I'll be living in a cardboard box.

This message is printed beneath a photo of a despondent looking young girl on one of four postcards that the Victoria Homelessness Steering Committee (VHSC) is circulating to raise awareness about the many faces of the homeless in our community.

The VHSC is also trying to draw attention to the many people who spend their time trying to help those without homes by providing shelter, housing, food, clothing, health services and more.

The postcard project and the declaration of this week as Homeless Week may have been inspired by Victoria's first homeless count and survey on January 15, 2005. Volunteers went out into the -10° Celsius night and counted 700 homeless people in Victoria, including 168 who were sleeping outside.

As I researched homelessness in Victoria, from my warm apartment with my high-speed Internet connection (no guilt, really), I became more and more distraught with the information I found on what's being done to put roofs over these peoples' heads.

I found that the government has facilitated a large number of roundtables, seminars, and consultations to receive community input on how they should operate programs. Unfortunately, I don't think sitting around in a hotel conference room is taking an active approach to solve the problem.

Of course research and planning is necessary for almost anything to work, particularly national-level programs. The problem is that these conferences have been going on for years, while the number of homeless people has been rising.

Reading about all of the promised support and funding was like reading about promises for easier access to post-secondary education, which I think we've all experienced as a big lie.

I know it would be a bad idea to just throw money at the issue. Walking downtown and passing out cash to people on the street would almost definitely not solve anything, especially since the 2005 homeless survey found addiction to be one of the most common causes of homelessness.

But I do believe that giving more money to programs already in place would make a huge difference. There are a number of organizations in Victoria that put a lot of time and resources into helping people on the street, such as the Victoria Cool Aid Society and Our Place. These groups, alongside many others, have repeatedly asked for more funding to aid them in what they're already doing.

Homeless Week is a great opportunity for the community to learn about volunteer positions with these organizations, and about how big of a problem homelessness really is.

There have been open houses at the Casual Labour Pool, Downtown Outreach Services and Streetlink Emergency Shelter to draw in possible volunteers and those who just want to learn more about the issues at hand. There was also a general information session featuring groups like Out of the Rain Shelter.

These well-established groups could do much more to help Victoria's homeless if only they had more funding.

While the higher powers of federal government discuss what to do, local groups who are right beside the problem are screaming for more funding.

I've always thought that a more holistic approach to every problem comes up with better solutions. But this only works if all the planning is actually implemented.

Hopefully Victoria's Homeless Week will not only draw attention to the problem but also inspire solutions.

Google this

Most trusted search engine stores information on our queries

by Anna Kemp

I use Google daily. Many people do. Whether we're checking movie times or settling an argument, we trust Google to sort through the billions of available Internet websites to swiftly and efficiently provide us with unbiased and relevant answers to our queries.

Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Google's founders, think they deserve this trust. Following their company motto, "don't do evil," they claim that their business is guided by ethical principles. "Searching and organizing all the world's information is an unusually important task that should be carried out by a company that is trustworthy and interested in the public good," wrote Brin and Page in a letter to Wall Street two years ago.

But Google's announcement this week—that it has agreed to censor itself in response to demands from the Chinese government—calls that trust into question.

Searches to be censored include references to Tibetan independence and the Tiananmen Square massacre, as well as access to sites for the banned Falun Gong movement, and others that may be critical of the Chinese government.

While Google admits "removing search results is inconsistent with Google's mission," they insist that for the more than 100 million Internet users in China, having access to some information is better than nothing.

Their suggestion that the poor Chinese public would have no access to information without Google is ludicrous.

A number of major search engines, including Microsoft and Yahoo, are already operating in China, not to mention the popular Chinese search engine Baidu.com, in which Google is a stakeholder.

Google's Chinese version, launched last Wednesday, is not part of some humanitarian mission, but rather a dive for market share in the fastest growing economy in the world.

It's hard to trust a company with a motto of "don't do evil" who supports an oppressive authoritarian regime. Clearly, the profit motive carries more weight in Google's decision-making than any lofty ideas of maintaining the "public good."

A recent case in the United States, which saw the search engine giant served with subpoenas to turn over search information to the U.S. government, further illustrates this point. The government has demanded a list of 1 million random web addresses from Google's databases, as well as records for all searches entered during a one-week period. Google is resisting the request, not on the basis of protecting user privacy, as the search information requested does not include IP addresses, but because of the breadth of the request. It sounds like Google is hoping to protect trade secrets.

The most immediately alarming fact about this case is the revelation that Google and other search engines cache this information. Presumably, they store it in order to do market research, helping them to sell more effective targeted advertising. But the fact that they store it at all presents a serious violation of user privacy.

Google capitulated to government requests in order to maintain market share in China, and they could eventually do the same in the United States, where the government shows an increasing tendency towards surveillance without judicial approval and unfriendliness towards political dissidence.

The best protection of people's rights to free speech and information, ideals we hold integral to the ethos of the Internet, is to make sure stored search records are not available to be requested.

Despite their stated company philosophy, it seems like Google is not "trustworthy and interested in the public good."

So be careful what you Google, and don't let them do you any evil. God knows they can't help themselves.

Where have all the good books gone?

Forget talent—all you need is the time and money to push your manuscript to the top

by Kim Armstrong

"Literature" is a scary word. It implies ancient, fusty, old tomes unread by all but college students and English professors, and enjoyed only by the latter.

But, more and more, the books being mass-produced for our consumption are inferior in quality, unoriginal and uninspired volumes fit only for recycling and eventual resurrection as ultra-soft, off-white recycled-fibre lavatory paper.

Almost the only place to find books worth reading now is the literature aisle, a section that the average citizen avoids like rain avoids the desert. Yes, people are reading less, but they lack good books to read.

Witness this stellar example of modern children's literature: an illustrated book entitled, "Walter the Farting Dog." Seriously. It's about a dog with flatulence so terrible that he is hated by his owners until, by means of his unbearably odorous intestinal excretions, he saves the family's valuables from thieves.

This incredible work of genius is so brilliant that it has even been translated into Latin. Were have we gone wrong?

I blame a large part of this literary regression on self-publishing—paying for all editorial work and publication out of the creator's pocket. It isn't the only factor, but it is a big one.

Due to self-publishing, any schmuck who fancies a career in writing can dribble out whatever incontinent mess the muses inspire and fling it, monkey-style, at an unsuspecting public

This is not to say that self-publishing cannot produce gems, nor that there are no talented writers in the field today. What it means is that there is no quality control.

Back in the good old days, the editors had power. Careers were made or broken depending on an editor's opinion of your eagerly proffered manuscript, and occasionally on what kind of week said editor was having.

When one is paying an editor by the hour, however, that editor can't then turn around and say, "No, this is terrible. Go back and try again," no matter how richly it's deserved. Thanks to an industry in which any aspiring writer with enough funds to produce and market their warped brainchild can become published, many people never get the opportunity to learn that authorhood is not the career for them.

Look at what happened to the music industry. Fifty years ago, it was very difficult to get a record deal.

Only the best made it to the top, and even if you didn't like an artist's style or music, you still had to admit that they were good at what they did.

Fast-forward to the new millennium where the situation is somewhat altered. The music industry is so desperate to find the marketable sound of the hour that people can even compete on national television for a record deal. As a result, most of the music on the airwaves today is as uninspired, unoriginal and inferior as the books we sacrifice rainforests to produce.

There is also the bonus of any minor flaw, like an utter lack of talent, being so heavily disguised by computer editing that the witness protection program would be jealous.

Anyone with the time and budget to successfully advertise their wares will rise to the top.

If we want literature and literacy to survive, we must bring back quality as an important aspect of publication.

Until we do, our children will continue to watch TV instead of picking up a book, and "Walter the Farting Dog" in multiple languages will continue to grace our bookstore shelves.

Mr. Pine comes in our castle

A romantic comedy full of tongue-in-cheek innuendo fills Craigdarroch Castle with a ghostly audience

What: Grace McKeaney's *The Coming of Mr. Pine*
Where: Craigdarroch Castle, 1050 Joan Cres.
When: Feb. 3 to 14
How Much: $18, call 592-5323, *www.craigdarrochcastle.com*

by Micah Luxen

A haunted castle stands high on a hill like a mournful beacon above the city, each passageway echoing old mysteries. Three ladies wait within, lost in longing, when a man suddenly appears.

The man is the illusory Mr. Pine, and the play is Grace McKeaney's award-winning comedy *The Coming of Mr. Pine,* opening at Craigdarroch Castle on Feb. 3.

Actor/director David MacPherson plays the lead role for the second time in his burgeoning career.

Pine himself may or may not be a physical manifestation of their fantasy, but the women don't seem to care. All three throw themselves at the mystery man, and a comedy of deft, light-hearted innuendo takes shape.

"Being so young, they haven't had the opportunity to have a really satisfactory love life so there's some nice tension as they fight over this one man," says MacPherson.

Stylistically absurdist, the play makes fun of expected behaviour patterns. "Mr. Pine comes in, never introduces himself and makes himself at home, which has an element of threat in it, but also has an element of humour. The three women are standing there going, 'Excuse me?'"

MacPherson's favourite line comes when Pine interrupts the ladies as they play-act having orgasms: "I may be mistaken, but I detect the distinct odor of shad [fish] spawning in this room."

MacPherson says audiences have always had a good time with *The Coming of Mr. Pine,* comparing it to a well-written episode of *Sex in the City.*

"[It's] a morality tale about the value of fantasy and why people sometimes repeat patterns in relationships."

The actor/director and all three actresses—Stacie Capt, Kara McLachlan and Kate Humble—have worked together before, but there remains a certain sexual tension during rehearsal.

PROVIDED PHOTO

UVic alum David MacPherson flanked by castmates Stacie Capt, Kara McLachlan and Kate Humble.

"I wish I could say that I'm a happy guy to be around all the time with all the sexual energy, but, in fact, they treat me like one of the women. So we have really good bitch-fests about things and talk about men."

Although MacPherson first played Pine at the Phoenix as a UVic student, his second effort brings a new challenge in the form of Craigdarroch Castle, "a character in itself," according to MacPherson. The castle doesn't allow the audience to sit down and become a standard theatre crowd, but requires the actors to navigate the huge mansion with the audience in tow.

"You get more of an experience than if you're working with artificial sets and artificial settings," says MacPherson.

"The house is full of memories and it's full of energy so when you walk into some rooms, you get this feeling that this room was full of romance and that was a room used for business."

The character of the castle has become so much a part of the play that, according to MacPherson, the actors have incorporated its haunting aura into their characters.

"Last night I instructed the cast to treat the audience like they were ghosts; they are people of the past who've entered the house. You move through the audience and you have to will them out of your way. If they don't move out of your way, you have to just be aware of them and brush them out of your way."

This is the first production of *The Coming of Mr. Pine* at Craigdarroch, but Victoria's Giggling Iguana Productions has been working with the castle for over five years. Producer Ian Case thought the castle would be a great venue, and when his first Christmas production turned away between 2,000 and 3,000 patrons, both Case and Craigdarroch's owners saw the castle's potential as a theatre venue.

"The castle staff and board were so pleased with the amount of media coverage and the number of new people that were coming to the castle for the first time—during the off-season to boot—that they encouraged me to think of new pieces that could work in the castle," says Case. "It's been a great relationship and mutually beneficial in many ways."

For obvious reasons, not many theatre productions have actors traversing a storybook castle with the audience tagging along. But think of it this way: it's a whole lot easier to give a standing ovation.

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Hip hop meets classical on CBC's arty late-night show

K-OS and Victoria Symphony's Tania Miller team up for the documentary and single 'Burning to Shine'

by Michelle da Silva

Most reality shows casually blur the line between "live" and "staged" TV, so it's refreshing to see a "reality show" that redefines the deservedly maligned genre.

The re-launch of CBC Television's *Zed* gives Canadians a good reason to stay up for late-night TV.

The show, which broadcasts on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 11:25 p.m., first launched in March 2002. Its initial mandate was to bring Canadian viewers an interactive platform for discussing Canadian cultural identity through what it called "open-source television."

Zed encouraged audience participation through the web and, in turn, showcased "Canadian-inspired" short films, documentaries, and music. The show wrapped up its spring 2005 season, but found itself homeless during the CBC lockout. This brief hiatus, however, allowed for a welcome redesign.

"The rebranding of *Zed* is the result of what [CBC] thought would make *Zed* more accessible," says Alden Habacon, Partnerships Manager for CBC's *Zed* and Radio 3. "We wanted to be more entertaining [and] more focused on accessibility."

The new *Zed*, which launched on Jan. 3, includes three TV series—*Zed Real* focuses on documentary films and the web, *Zed Candid* features short films and conversations, and *Zed Tunes* looks at up-and-coming music. To make all of these shows more accessible to viewers, *Zed* has opened forums for audience participation through blogs, photo websites, phone calls, and audience submissions.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Victoria Symphony Music Director Tania Miller conducts the CBC Radio Orchestra in a collaboration with hip-hop artist K-OS.

"Anyone can submit from anywhere," says Habacon. "We're currently partnering up with film schools so that the students have a place to show their work."

But you don't have to be an art-school student to get your work on national TV. The new show aims for a broader public audience and should be a more accessible venue for Canada's creative talent. Habacon characterizes the old *Zed* as unapproachably "dark, obscure, and artsy."

"Now you don't have to be an expert in film and music to enjoy the show," says Habacon. "The average Canadian loves art, but if you need to be an expert to enjoy the show, the show isn't serving the public."

Habacon hopes that with *Zed*'s new focus on "storytelling in any format," all Canadians will find something they can identify with. He says that there is currently no other place on TV to watch short films and entertaining documentaries.

"You have to end up at some independent film festival where they show a couple [short films] before the feature," says Habacon. "The fact that there's a TV show where anyone can watch one is a big deal!"

The show's producers anticipate the Feb. 7 premier of "Burning to Shine" on *Zed Real* to be a "big deal." Billed with the tagline "Two Musical Worlds Collide," the documentary follows an unusual and dramatic collaboration between Canadian hip-hop artist K-OS and the CBC Radio Orchestra, the only remaining radio orchestra in North America. The orchestra's illustrious conductor is none other than Tania Miller, director of the Victoria Symphony.

In the film, director and producer Jennifer Ouano documents a 43-day intense songwriting process between K-OS, who claims to have no formal music training, and classically-trained orchestral arrangers, culminating in a live three-hour recording session for a track called "Burning to Shine."

"This shows the clash of culture between contemporary pop culture and great Canadian tradition," says Habacon. "We're constantly trying to determine whether [our traditions] are relevant in culture today."

Tania Miller hopes they are. "It's important for classical music to look at music of today and bridge those two worlds," she says in the film. "It's important to remain engaged."

Looking at the line-up of upcoming content for all three *Zed* shows and the focus on real viewer accessibility, it seems that Canada's oldest and most established broadcaster is staying connected with the nation it represents.

"Make the viewer feel a part of the show," says Habacon. "You can come up with as much great programming as you want, but if it isn't accessible to the individual viewer, you have nothing."

CD | THE BLED

The Bled
Found in the Flood
Vagrant

by Kevin Ehman

The Bled, from Tucson, Arizona, are screamo's newest darlings—and for good reason. Their second disc, *Found in the Flood*, is a big leap forward from their debut, *Pass the Flask*, and introduces new melodic instrumentation and vocals.

Lead singer/screamer James Munoz credits expanding his spectrum of influence to include literature and family as the reason the disc has a more mature and forward-leaning sound. The band also had some time between labels, and they figure the lack of corporate nagging gave them the chance to decide where they wanted to take their sound.

The lyrical depth, heavy-then-soft pace changes, and uber-clean production are just some of the reasons *Found* is a sure thing for extreme-sports soundtrack discs and punkers alike. Also, a stint on the '05 Warped Tour won the band a larger fan base, securing them the services of producer Mark Trombino (Blink 182, Jimmy Eat World), who had never worked with such a heavy band. The result is a more solid overall album than *Flask*, but a loss of heaviness that might alienate some of the band's original fans.

And while nearly every song is good, there is no standout track on *Flood* to match *Flask's* "Dale Earnhardt's Seatbelt". Fans of Alexisonfire, Refused, and From Autumn to Ashes will love this disc, but hardcore metal/screamcore fans need not apply.

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MOVIE | MATCH POINT

Allen's 'rebirth' wins set, loses match

by Briony Smith

PROVIDED PHOTO

Scarlett Johansson carries on a tradition of sturdy dramatic roles that make use of her ungodly lips.

Some of the best directors working today seem to have gone haywire. Robert Altman made a Grisham thriller and a ballet procedural, while rock-'em-shock-'em Danny Boyle of *Trainspotting* fame made the delightful children's tale, *Millions*. Michel Gondry has a Dave Chappelle *Block Party* coming up, while Spike Lee's bank-heist flick hits theaters soon.

Something is definitely afoot in auteurland. So while it might seem less surprising that Woody Allen would make *Match Point*, the fact is that, while the movie may be a satisfactory thriller, it isn't on par with his best work and definitely doesn't usher in Allen's second coming.

After a dry spell, to put it kindly, over the last decade or so—featuring the trio of awfulness *The Curse of the Jade Scorpion*, *Hollywood Ending*, and (save us) *Anything Else* starring Jason Biggs—Allen was due to come out swinging against cries of "past his prime," and *Match Point* has been hailed by many critics as the rebirth of Allen's career.

But it's somewhat of a disappointment. Well, perhaps that's being a bit hasty. For the student of Allen's oeuvre, *Match Point* is a fun little romp, if a little somber, with some interesting casting and a plot as familiar and cozy as your childhood blankie. For those who go to the movies to be taken on a ride, *Match Point* is a well-oiled "class struggle" or "sordid affair" flick.

Jonathan Rhys-Myers plays Chris Wilton, a former tennis pro who snags a spot at a cushy country club in London lobbing balls to the gentry. The movie spares us no montage in informing us that he wants to blend in with his clientele, from cultivating a love of opera to plowing through Dostoyevsky.

This upper-class chicanery gets him in good with one of his clients, Tom Hewett (the mega-charming Matthew Goode), whose sister, played by Emily Mortimer, immediately likes what he's selling.

She can experience the thrill of slumming it with the help (whom Tom refers to as "Hey, Irish!"), and later gets him whisked off the clay and into one of her Daddy's companies.

But it's Tom's saucy American girlfriend, the impeccably named Nola Rice (Scarlett Johansson), whom Chris really wants. Like any film noir, our hero is drawn to the a woman capable of inspiring such ridiculous lines as "Did anyone tell you you have the most sensual lips?"

Any student of film—or even the more astute moviegoer—can probably see where *Match Point* is headed, and the cast is indeed serviceable.

Rhys-Myers conveys the appropriate angst and shiftiness, and while Johansson has received criticism that she isn't ripe enough to be the world-weary femme fatale, her performance works well as a sort of meta-theatrical self-comment.

Her character is, in fact, a callow young woman who thinks she can be an actress, which seems to be the only plausible career option for a callow young woman. Her immaturity and progressively rampant senselessness don't ring too false, although her performance probably wouldn't hold up under heavy scrutiny.

Those sensual lips have to work too hard to convey character. Woody was asleep on the job trying to write rounded people—people with jobs, for example. This lack of occupation helps keep the film firmly entrenched in the entertainment camp, which is exacerbated by the tepid, quasi-risqué sex scenes. The absence of nudity adds to the film's curious falsity—since Chris and Nola's lust should be pitched at epic noir levels, some breasts or a bum could at least make an appearance

In addition to their "jobs" and "sex," Allen's writing of the female characters makes Chris's path predictable: Chloe as the boring (but rich!) Betty to Nola's irresistible Veronica. There really is no nuance of character to make it seem more plausible that Chris could love Chloe other than for the money, making it easy to seek Nola's exotic embrace until their affair threatens his treasured lifestyle. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the only noir-appropriate way out after the affair.

This is at the heart of the simple story. *Match Point* is a study of the unpleasant things people will do to get what they want—really the engine at the heart of all noir stories. As a simple tale well-made, *Match Point* works in spite of a few missteps, including constant harping on the theme of luck and the perplexing appearance of a couple of ghosts.

But viewers looking for anything more than a fun watch with predictable twists and turns played against the easy-as-pie black-and-black noir universe should look elsewhere.

Allen has made a good film here, yes, but not a great one. It belongs near the top of its genre pile, but in a genre pile nevertheless. *Match Point* doesn't have the rich characterization, the humour, or the ingenuity of his great films *Annie Hall*, *Manhattan*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters*.

Like Chloe, Allen's slumming. But at least he's doing it well.

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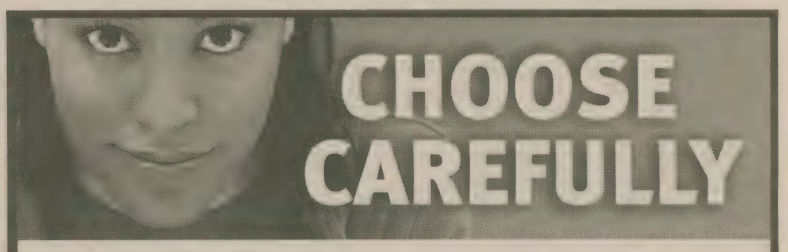
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THEATRE | FAMOUS PUPPET DEATH SCENES

Death Scenes as tragedy, comedy and pure bloody spectacle

What: The Old Trout Puppet Workshop's *Famous Puppet Death Scenes* (preview)
Where: UVic's Phoenix Theatre
When: Feb. 2, 3, and 4 @ 8 p.m.
How much: $10 to $20 (call 721-8000)

by Steve Carey

You can run but you can't hide—death is everywhere in The Old Trout Puppet Workshop's *Famous Puppet Death Scenes*.

Those lucky enough to see a preview show at the Phoenix Theatre on Jan. 28 or 30 caught some top-quality entertainment.

The Old Trouts make good use of the space through each of the 25 different scenes. The lighting design is fantastic, with light-sources setting and resetting the mood of a scene or changing the emotion in a puppet's face.

The stage is divided up by a wooden art-deco puppet theatre. There is a main curtain and two side doors, each with a smaller curtain. A light box to display text is also used.

In one of the scenes, a puppet everyman rambles around the main stage dressed in a smart-looking suit and tie. A large fist creeps up behind him, the music lapses momentarily and the fist disappears. The puppet looks around and sees nothing.

Then his head is crushed.

The everyman's scenes are interspersed with other excellent shorts, such as "King Jeff," a tale that uses aspect, distance and the main frame of the puppet set to provide the illusion of floating through the heavens.

Scored with strings, the ingenuity in "King Jeff" made it without a doubt one of the most memorable shorts of the play.

There are stages within stages, such as when puppeteers exit the two doors and move the production down-stage, using Punch and Judy box puppets and a giant pop-up book, among other contraptions, to display their snapshot stories.

The puppets bleed, betray, love, destroy, pillage, fear and fail. Their strings, wires, rods and levers are all controlled by gestures of the puppeteers.

The Old Trout puppeteers, although visible, are not intrusive. In their stark black suits, they resemble funeral home staff, passing their own emotions to the puppets they control.

The play does include several violent deaths, as well as some wholly deserved.

There are tragic deaths, unnecessary deaths, and some that are just bad-horror-movie funny.

The play runs roughly 70 minutes, with no intermission, and will leave children (and adults) pondering human mortality. Be prepared to talk life and death with your kids/partner/parent/friend after the show.

Live theatre has a pulse that can't be reproduced. The show is in town for only a few more days, so check it out while you still can.

Eventually, like so many doomed puppets, your time will come.

PROVIDED PHOTO

A puppet everyman suspects nothing . . . until it's too late.

GAME | PRIME MINISTER FOREVER

Better than *World of Warcraft*?

by David Karp

The multitudes of people who awaken each morning wishing they were Stephen Harper can stop fretting. Now anyone can be a politician, thanks to *Prime Minister Forever–Canada 2006*.

Produced by Vancouver-based 80soft.com, the turn-based role-playing game allows gamers to take election campaigns into their own hands. Players can run the 2006 election campaign for one of the 11 parties of their choice or independent candidate Bev Desjarlais. The two-month campaign takes about an hour to complete in the game.

Prime Minister Forever features meticulous details—real candidates are programmed in for each of Canada's 308 ridings, and the game features realistic polling in each part of the country. Players can run attack ads, develop their party's platform, choose where to target their campaigning, spin news stories and more. Gamers must keep a close eye on their party's budget and be careful not to tire out their leader, lest they start making blunders.

The game is customizable, allowing players to change the leader of each party. Gamers can replace Paul Martin or Stephen Harper with Belinda Stronach (or any number of other prominent politicians) or create a fictional leader and place him or her in the game. To mix things up a bit, players can also contest elections from 1993 onwards.

Prime Minister Forever is amusing and challenging, but loses its novelty in time. There are a limited number of tasks players can choose from—even fewer for smaller parties—and turns can quickly become repetitive.

Still, the game is never predictable. Sudden scandals appear to quickly shift your party's momentum.

Anyone who is disappointed to see the election campaign finished will get a kick out of the game. The chance to be in the driver's seat and immersed in a campaign without leaving the living room is much more appealing than braving the rain and wind to pound on doors. However, the impressive political details built into *Prime Minister Forever* will be lost on players who don't follow politics.

The complete PC version of the game can be downloaded for $18.95 from www.80soft.com. A free demo is also available.

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BAND PROFILE | THE BREAKMEN

Just don't call them alt-country

by Seth Cooper

PROVIDED PHOTO

Songwriter/guitarist Lee Watson (far right) lives in Victoria.

Ask Archie Pateman of The Breakmen, Vancouver's upstart alt-bluegrass quartet, why he thinks bluegrass has undergone such a resurgence, and he laughs sheepishly. "*Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?*" he says. "It's the beautiful voice of George Clooney singing bluegrass," quips Pateman, although he quickly points out that it's not really George Clooney's voice.

"I also think [bluegrass] is something that you come back to," he says. "You go through your rock stage, and you go through this different stuff . . . and you end up landing on it again later on."

And it's perhaps this progression that makes The Breakmen's sound so unique and difficult to label. It seems that even the band struggles with genre identity.

"We don't really do that much bluegrass. If you were really into bluegrass, you wouldn't consider us a bluegrass band," says Pateman. And he's just as wary of being labeled alt-country.

"We're not alt-country. If I was to call us alt-anything, it would be alt-bluegrass. We're Bill Monroe takes Hank Williams for a drink at Townes' place."

All four members of the band are already seasoned, talented musicians in their mid- to late-20s: Ben Rogalsky, Matthew Lawson, and the tailor-named-for-bluegrass Archie Pateman and Lee Watson.

Each comes from a varied musical and personal background—Pateman and Lawson are longtime treeplanters, Watson dabbles in carpentry, and Rogalsky has been active in the Vancouver theatre scene. Each contributes his own style to create the Breakmen's genre-bending milieu.

"I don't think we chose bluegrass," says Pateman. "It's sort of what we stumbled upon, because it's such a challenging genre of music for instrumentalist . . . we just sort of found ourselves there."

The band formed in August 2005. Earlier in the summer, Pateman, Watson and Lawson toured across the country in a '67 Chevy, playing small venues along the way. Rogalsky joined the band in August, and The Breakmen began honing their offbeat songwriting, upbeat rhythms and soaring harmonies. Amazingly, they've been able to do all this with Watson living in Victoria while the band remains based in Vancouver.

"All winter we've been together if not once a week, then once every two weeks. If we have two shows staggered . . . we'll hang out for five days straight and we'll play a gig in between. That's a really cool aspect [of the band]. We really like each other."

They returned to the coast in August and have been playing locally since, developing a following around Vancouver and Victoria, as well as smaller towns all over the Island. Their first Victoria gig was at the tiny Spiral Café in Esquimalt, to no more than 35 appreciative fans.

Recently, they played the Victoria Event Centre to a rowdy hodgepodge crowd of treeplanters, musicians, senior citizens, and Saturday-night hipsters. Perhaps victims of their own success, they had a hard time playing above the noise level of the near-capacity crowd. "It was a social crowd. It was Saturday night," says Pateman. "You need a much louder sound to penetrate that. . . . I thought Vancouver was more rowdy, but after what I saw [in Victoria], that was great. It was really an electric crowd."

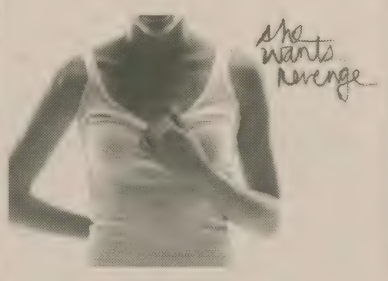
The Breakmen have plans to return to Victoria as soon as their busy schedule allows. "I really love Victoria audiences because so many of them are such fantastic musicians. . . . There's a great roots scene in Victoria," he says.

The band is currently in the studio working on an album produced by banjo and guitar virtuoso Ivan Rosenberg. They have an upcoming show Feb. 17 at Vancouver's Rime with Victoria's own Outlaw Socials. "Right now, they're The Breakmen's favorite band," says Pateman.

When asked if he's surprised at the band's success in such a short time, Pateman pauses. "I don't want to say I'm surprised, because we all work really hard. It matters a lot to us. It's our priority."

Visit www.thebreakmen.com for more info.

CD | SHE WANTS REVENGE



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Flawless Records

by Steve Carey

Push up the sleeves on your Members Only jacket and slap on your Chuck Taylors: She Wants Revenge's dark, droning, repetitive sound will have you thinking retro.

The time is right for She Wants Revenge, a twosome from San Fernando Valley, California.

Signed to Fred Durst's Flawless record label, they have nowhere to go but up.

This is music for kids going through that horrible and listless crush phase.

She Wants Revenge has stated that they wanted to make an album with deep lyrics—deep enough, according to DJ Adam 12, to "make girls cry."

The duo, singer and guitarist Justin Warfield and Adam Bravin (DJ Adam 12), layer simple keyboard and drum-machine beats with single-note bass playing and occasional droning guitar riffs.

Warfield's cold monotone owes something to Interpol singer Paul Banks—enough, in fact, to make first-time listeners mistake She Wants Revenge's single "Tear You Apart" for a new Interpol track.

The club scene will probably eat it up. Maybe the record will even inspire some ponderous post-modernism, drawing attention to She Wants Revenge's many worthy predecessors, from whom they take obvious inspiration.

CD | YELLOWCARD

Yellowcard
Lights and Sounds
Capitol Records

by James Nason

Yellowcard's major-label success with 2003's *Ocean Avenue* left the band with something to prove.

"We definitely stepped outside of our boundaries with the new album," said lead singer Ryan Key in an MTV interview. "We want to be a band that matters to people." Their second effort with EMI, *Lights and Sounds*, is a step in the right direction.

Released in November, the album's first single, "Lights and Sounds," shows a movement away from emo and pop-punk clichés. The single is more stripped-down and grittier than catchy tracks like "Ocean Avenue." The band relies less on Sean Mackin's violin as a gimmick and more on their strength as a group.

Lights and Sounds offers more variety than Yellowcard's three previous releases combined. "Sure Thing Falling" banks on distinct rock riffing, Mackin picks up a mandolin for "City of Devils," "Two Weeks From Twenty" combines jazz guitar solos and anti-war messages, and the lush orchestration of "How I Go" even features the Dixie Chicks' Natalie Maines singing harmony.

Lights and Sounds stretches Yellowcard farther than their previous albums and shows off their growth as a band. It's an enjoyable album that goes where less courageous pop-punk acts won't dare.

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VIKES ScoreBoard

Vikes swimming
Women third; men fourth at the Canada West Championships

Second-year swimmer **Mackenzie Downing** and first-year swimmer **Anne Schmuck** came out strong with eight individual medals between them at the Canada West Championships Jan. 29 and 30 in Vancouver.

Schmuck was named Canada West rookie of the year for dual gold medals in the 400-metre I.M. (4:46.84) and the 800-metre freestyle (8:46.07), silver in the 400-metre freestyle (4:20.36), and bronze medals in two relays.

In the 800-metre and 400-metre freestyle events, Schmuck shared the glory with Downing, who took silver in the longer race (8:52.92) and bronze in the shorter event (4:20.98).

Downing came first in two butterfly events, the 50-metre (28.91) and 200-metre (2:13.36), second in the 100-metre butterfly (1:02.17), and third in two relays.

The Vikes women nabbed bronze in the 4x200-metre freestyle relay (8:37.35) with Downing, Schmuck, **Kim Bryan** and **Mary-Claire Zachernuk** and in the 4x100-metre medley relay (4:05.96) with Downing, Schmuck, **Selina Light** and Zachernuk.

On the men's side, Vike **Greer Jacks** finished first in four freestyle consolation finals: the 50-metre (25.02), 100-metre (53.08), 200-metre (1:55.47) and 400-metre (4:05.27) events.

Women's basketball
Vikes 65–T-Birds 69

A youthful UVic team went down to the top-ranked UBC Thunderbirds 69–65 Jan. 28 in Vancouver.

"We are a young team and we are still learning how to play the game," said Vikes head coach **Brian Cheng**. "Give credit to UBC. They showed tonight why they are number one."

The Vikes gave a gritty, respectable effort and the teams were locked at 39 at the break.

The T-Birds maintained a narrow lead throughout the second frame but sealed the deal shooting 83 per cent outside the arc.

Ashley Kimmett 16 points; **Leanne Shenton** 14 points; **Eilish Murtagh** 10 points.

Record: 6–11

Men's bball
Vikes 62–T-Birds 65

UVic gave the undefeated UBC Thunderbirds a run for the money Jan. 28 in Vancouver, but the game seemed to come down to free throws.

UBC went on a 23–6 run, taking the score to 30–16 before UVic was able to fight back and close out the half down seven at 36–29.

The lead flip-flopped, but with two minutes to play, Chad Clifford was fouled twice and made four free throws to put the T-Birds up 64–60. **Tyler Hass** laid in the ball for two, but four shots from the field and two free throws came up empty.

Jacob Doerksen 15 points, five boards; **Graeme Bollinger** 13 points; Hass 11 points, five boards; **Chris Trumpy** seven points, seven boards.

Record: 12–5

Vikes go hard south of the border

by Matthew Gauk

The annual reading break trip to Florida for the men's and women's soccer teams isn't the only time the Vikes head south. In the last few months there has been an increase in the number of UVic sports teams traveling to the U.S. for exhibition and tournament play.

The results have been mixed. In September, the Vikes men's golf team tied for 10th in the Western Washington University Invitational in Bellingham.

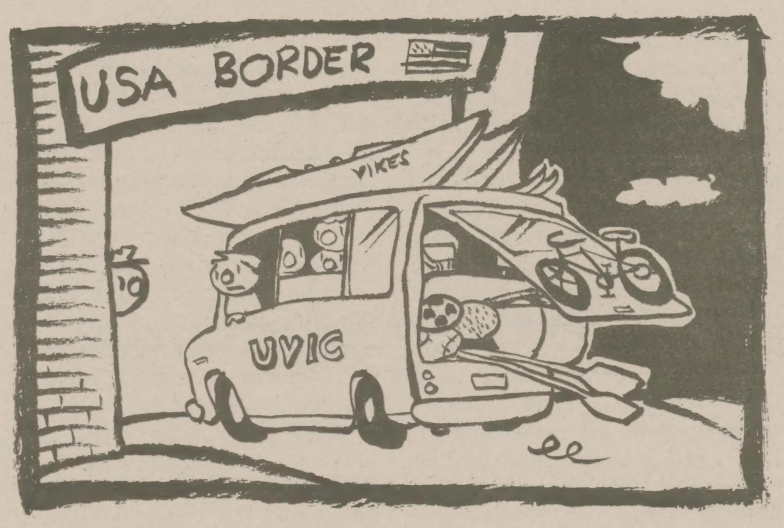
The same team finished sixth in November at the Oklahoma Christian Invitational.

On the other hand, UVic rowers made good in October. The Vikes women's four crew and the lightweight women's four both finished first at the Head of the Charles regatta in Boston.

"With such strong competition here, winning an event is extremely difficult," said the head coach of women's rowing Rick Crawley. "To win two events is very rare and a remarkable feat. I am very proud of our crews."

In early November, the men's basketball team, ranked fifth amongst Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) competitors, traveled to the States for exhibition play. They dropped three games against as many American teams, losing 81–54 to Brigham Young University, 77–49 to Weber State University and 75–51 to Colorado University. Despite the three 20-plus spreads, the hard-fought games offered valuable learning for the players and coaching staff.

"I think it was good for us. It showed us why we need to do the little things we work at day-in and day-out," said Craig Beaucamp, the team's head coach. "Those little things, when they're not done well, are really exploited when you play against bigger, stronger and quicker opponents."



ANTHONY FRATTAROLI GRAPHIC

Those American teams—bigger, stronger and quicker—exposed the ways Vikes ballers guard, how they cut to the open, transition to defense, and close out, said Beaucamp. And it brought him and his team back to McKinnon Gym to focus on the skills.

James Keogh, the Vikes co-ordinator of athletics, explained that the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletics Association) teams organize exhibition play with Canadian teams through Basketball Travelers Inc., an American organization that specializes in arranging inter-league play.

"It's about the only way we could afford to do something like that," said Keogh. "They underwrote our trip down there."

The NCAA has strict rules for American college sports teams regarding what teams they play and when.

These restrictions are often avoided by bringing in teams from out of the country or by travelling abroad for competition. Their limit on non-conference play isn't affected by playing Canadian teams.

"When you play in those arenas and [with] the format down there, there's a lot more money thrown into the games—the production and publicity," said Beaucamp. "It's an exciting environment to be in and it's exciting seeing Canadian universities against some of those big names that everybody hears about—the Dukes and the Connecticuts."

The trend has increased over the last three years because of the rules and regulations by which the NCAA is set up. According to Beaucamp, January is a key time for the NCAA to look at their rules regarding exhibition play, and he's unsure of what the future holds for the Vikes' southern road trips.

"But I'm not sure if this is going to continue or not," said Beaucamp.

The Vikes men's and women's soccer teams travel to Fort Lauderdale every spring, but the teams organize the trip, fundraise, and foot the bill themselves. The men's team has been doing this for 15 years, and the women's team for five.

"We do well," said women's soccer coach Tracy David. "Usually we come out of there with two wins and a tie, or two ties and a win."

Playing against NCAA teams is a good opportunity for UVic in terms of its reputation, said Keogh.

"The fact that they felt we were a good enough team to invest that kind of money in and to bring us down there says very good things about our basketball program."

The greater exposure also attracts more student athletes, especially since UVic has hosted an NCAA team on its own campus: Division One Creighton University paid a visit two seasons ago. It gives the fans the opportunity to see a different level of university competition and how American teams play, said Keogh.

"There's a lot more money in American school sports, so that's the long and the short of it."

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Goalie fishes for starting job with Salmon Kings

Rob McVicar is making a career out of riding the pine

by David Karp

Rob McVicar is becoming an experienced benchwarmer.

The Victoria Salmon Kings' goaltender has toured Western Canada this season as the number two guy for three pro teams. A dominating presence in net at six-foot-four, McVicar started this season in Winnipeg as backup for Wade Flaherty with the Manitoba Moose, the Canucks' American Hockey League affiliate.

But when Canucks goaltender Dan Cloutier injured his knee Nov. 20 in Anaheim, McVicar was called up to the big team to warm the bench.

In Cloutier's absence, the Canucks started riding 25-year-old Alex Auld, who only had 14 NHL games under his belt prior to this season. The Canucks seemed reluctant to give McVicar a chance, until Auld let in six goals against Colorado on Nov. 27. At that point, with 16 minutes remaining, the coach was ready for the backup.

There was one problem—McVicar didn't have a facemask.

"The trainer put it in the dressing room, which was pretty frustrating because you don't know how many chances you're going to get," remembered McVicar Jan. 26. By the time the 24-year-old from Brandon, Manitoba had retrieved his mask and the play had stopped, the game was almost over, so McVicar stayed on the bench. "It was very upsetting," he said.

But McVicar's 15 minutes of fame—well, two minutes and 44 seconds, to be precise—came on Dec. 1 in Edmonton after Auld let in five goals. McVicar went in to finish the game.

"It was only three minutes, but it was kind of exciting even though I didn't get a shot or anything. I think I touched the puck a couple times.

"I was happy it happened in Canada. A lot of family and friends did see it."

The ordeal also gave McVicar experience warming airplane seats. When there's time between games to send a player back to the farm team, management often does so to save space under their salary cap. The Canucks sent McVicar back and forth between Vancouver and Winnipeg five times.

"I think there was a stretch where I was on a plane every day for about a week," recalled McVicar. "But it was a great experience. I wouldn't have traded it for anything."

But the experience didn't last. The day after McVicar made his December NHL debut in Edmonton, the Canucks traded for Maxime Ouellet, a goaltender with the Washington Capitals. Ouellet took McVicar's second-string spot on the Canuck's bench the following game and the Canucks shipped McVicar to Victoria to play in the ECHL, one tier below the American Hockey League.

"You do want to play every game," he said. "It is kind of tough watching all the time."

With the Salmon Kings, McVicar is trying to prove he can be more than a backup. He joined the Victoria team in Idaho for the first of a three-game winning streak and made 30 saves in a 4–2 win over the Steelheads.

But the Salmon Kings hired a new coach on Jan. 17, and he isn't sold on McVicar—yet.

"That's something we have to talk about internally as to where we're at with our goaltenders," said Salmon Kings head coach Troy Ward.

"I am a one-goalie guy. I'm going to ride a goalie when I think we've got that goalie. I've just got to sit back and see if I feel like we've got that goalie."

Ward said he doesn't know if that goalie will be McVicar. "I'm a guy that usually sleeps on things and takes my time," he said.

But if last weekend was any indication, McVicar may be in trouble. He started Jan. 27 against Phoenix, but was yanked in the first period after letting in two goals on nine shots.

Ward sent in B.J. Boxma, who got the start again the following night, and saved all but one of the 29 shots he faced in a 1–0 overtime loss. Boxma has also posted strong numbers for the S-Kings with a .906 save percentage and a 3.15 goals against average. McVicar had a .877 save percentage and a 4.04 goals against average as of Jan. 31.

But Ward's decision may come down to McVicar's 7–7–0 record, versus Boxma's dismal 1–7–2 record.

David Currie is also in the running for the top spot and so far he's appeared in 10 games this season with the Kings.

But with Ouellet struggling in Vancouver and Cloutier out at least until the playoffs, there's always a chance McVicar could get another shot with the Canucks. Ouellet is winless in his three Canucks appearances this season.

"I've seen he's been struggling, and I don't care. I really don't care," said McVicar. "I'm worried about myself and what I'm doing, and that's all you can control.

"I want to be up to the next level, but I want [the Canucks] to believe in me, and I want to prove to them that I belong there."

DAVID KARP PHOTO

First-string hopeful Rob McVicar defends the net and his place on the roster during a Salmon Kings practice Jan. 26.

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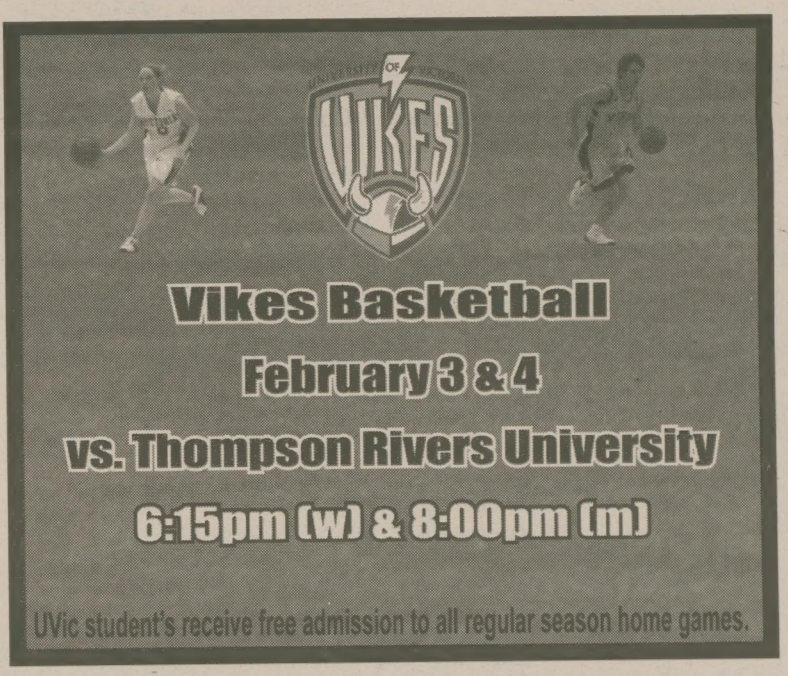
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OLYMPIC WARM-UP | SPEED SKATING

Canadian speedsters pursue gold on the frozen track

The Canadian women will contest the title of the latest Olympic event at the oval—the team pursuit

by Gavin Day

The Canadian Olympic Association announced that Danielle Goyette, a left-winger with the women's hockey team, will bear the Canadian flag during the Games' opening ceremonies. Goyette, 40, has been a member of the Canadian team since women's hockey was introduced at the Olympics in Nagano eight years ago.

Short Track

Short track is a fast paced, high-energy sport where a crash can be disastrous.

Before her gold medal in Salt Lake City, Canadian Annie Perrault was in a three-skater crash where a blade sliced her thigh. The incident in an example of the commonality of crashes in short-track speed skating.

Four years ago an unheralded Australian named Steven Bradbury, who almost died in a 1994 speed-skating accident, captured the gold in the men's 1,000-metre. In the semis and the finals he was in the back of the pack, but took advantage of his opponents' crash. In the final, all four of his opponents bailed on the last turn of the race, allowing him to glide to the win as "an accidental winter gold hero," according to *The Australian* newspaper, and the southern country's first gold metal winner at a winter Games. In Oz, "doing a Bradbury," means to come from behind—against all odds.

Canada looks to defend their top rank in the 5,000-metre relay, which will be one of the hotly contested events for spectators to follow in Torino. Veteran and short-track icon Marc Gagnon has retired, but a strong team returns from Salt Lake. Eric Bedard, Jonathan Guilmette, Mathieu Turcotte and Francois-Louis Tremblay (nicknamed Flu) all have experience on the Olympic scene and could medal in various disciplines.

The premier name in the men's event is American Apolo Anton Ohno. Look for him to battle for medals in a number of finals.

The women's team is also strong and has developed into one of the best 3,000-metre relay teams in the world. Alanna Kraus came close to winning medals in Salt Lake on several occasions and looks ready to make a breakthrough this time around. Amanda Overland is another competitor scoring good results in the circuit leading up to Torino.

The premier nations in short track are China, South Korea and Italy.

Long Track

Canada's strength in women's speed skating used to be the sprint team. However, the days of Catriona LeMay Doan and Susan Auch have past.

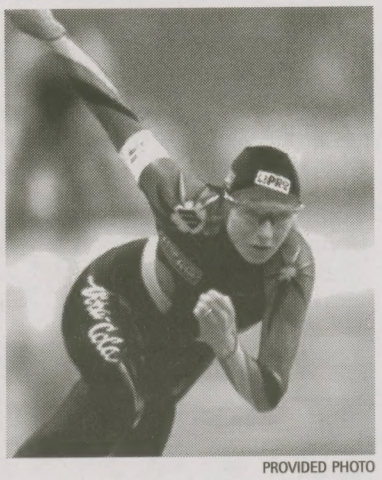
In Torino, the strength of the Canucks will come from the middle and long distance skaters. Cindy Klassen is a threat in the 1,500-metre, 3,000-metre and 5,000-metre and has been a force on the World Cup circuit. Joining her in the 3,000-metre and 5,000-metre will be Clara Hughes, who has won medals at the Olympics in cycling and speed skating.

Kristina Groves could be the busiest athlete at Torino and will compete in almost every distance possible. Shannon Rempel will lead a young Canadian sprint team, but will be hard pressed to defeat Jennifer Rodriguez of the United States and the 1998 500-metre champion, Marianne Timmer of the Netherlands.

Jeremy Wotherspoon, Canada's likeliest man to medal in the short track, would like to turn World Cup superiority into Olympic gold. Four years ago, he stumbled only a few strides into the first heat of the 500-metre, costing him his best chance at a metal. He has not been as big a force in the lead up to these Games, but is still very strong in both the 500-metre and 1,000-metre events. The pursuit team, led by veteran skater Steven Elm, is a threat to medal.

The American team has grown leaps and bounds thanks to the oval in Salt Lake City, and Shani Davis is almost a lock in the 1,000-metre and 1,500-metre events. He had been undefeated in the 1,000-metre until last month's world sprint championships, where he lost two races while battling illness.

The other long-track powers come from the Netherlands, Japan, Korea and Norway. Speed skating remains one of the most diverse sports in terms of nations with powerful teams.



PROVIDED PHOTO

So fast: Catriona LeMay Doan.

A new long-track event is the team pursuit. In this aptly named race, two teams of three skaters take off from opposing ends of the track and "pursue" each other around the rink until one team catches the other or they cover 3,000 metres, in which case the fastest time wins.

The Canadian women are expected to challenge the German and Japanese for gold.

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School District No. 34 (Abbotsford) is recruiting for various teaching positions for the September 2006-07 school year. Find out more by attending an information session Wednesday, Feb 8, 2006 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the MacLaurin Building Room D115. For more information about upcoming employer information sessions please visit www.careerservices.uvic.ca

Thinking of a career in Naturopathic Medicine? The Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine is Western Canada's only Naturopathic Medical School. Come to an information session on Wednesday, February 8th, 2006 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. to learn more about this exciting opportunity. Location: Campus Services Building Room 110 (next to the bookstore). For more information about upcoming employer information sessions please visit www.careerservices.uvic.ca

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University Women's Club Scholarship Annual Evening of Music: Free and open to the public. A lively performance of classical piano, jazz and vocals by UWC Music Scholarship winner Nina Horvath and colleagues from the UVic Faculty of Music. Donations to the University Women's Club Scholarship and Bursary Fund gratefully accepted. Thursday, February 16th, 8:00 p.m. Philip T. Young Recital Hall, Maclaurin Building, University of Victoria.

THE NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP - FEBRUARY MEETING
"Where have all the flowers gone?" Ecological detective Emily Gonzales investigates the effects that herbivores and non-native grasses have on the native plants of our region. Thursday, February 16, 2006 at 7pm sharp. UVic, MacLaurin Bldg, Rm D-116. Non member drop-in fee: $2. For more info contact 595-5820.

SERVICES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Co-op Forum for Lower Vancouver Island. Fairfield United Church, Lower Hall 8:30 (registration and coffee from 8am) to noon.

Crocus flowers are always a welcome sign of spring, and every year CNIB's Focus on Crocus fundraiser helps raise money to provide services for people with vision loss on Vancouver Island. Purchase a few pots of these lovely blooms and know you've made difference in the life a person who is visually impaired. Crocuses will be conveniently on sale at all Thrifty Foods locations (2 for $4) from January 25 to February 7, 2006.

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The Punjab University, CHANDI GARH (U.T.) INDIA has been designated by the Ministry of Advanced Education British Columbia. If you are interested in obtaining education at the PUNJAB UNIVERSITY CHANDI GARH you can get a student loan from the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education. For more information you can contact: mtatla@uvic.ca

Is your life affected by someone's drinking? Help is available in the Victoria area. Call 383-4020 for more information or visit www.bcyukon-al-anon.org for more information.

Saanich Recreation offers quality, affordable Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton Leagues and Skills Development for pre-teens, teens and adults in state-of-the-art double gymnasium at Colquitz Middle School.
www.saanichrecreation.com or 475-5400 for details.

Saanich Recreation offers fun and tasty cooking workshops for pre-teens, teens and adults in fully-outfitted demonstration kitchen at Colquitz Middle School.
www.saanichrecreation.com or 475-5400 for details.

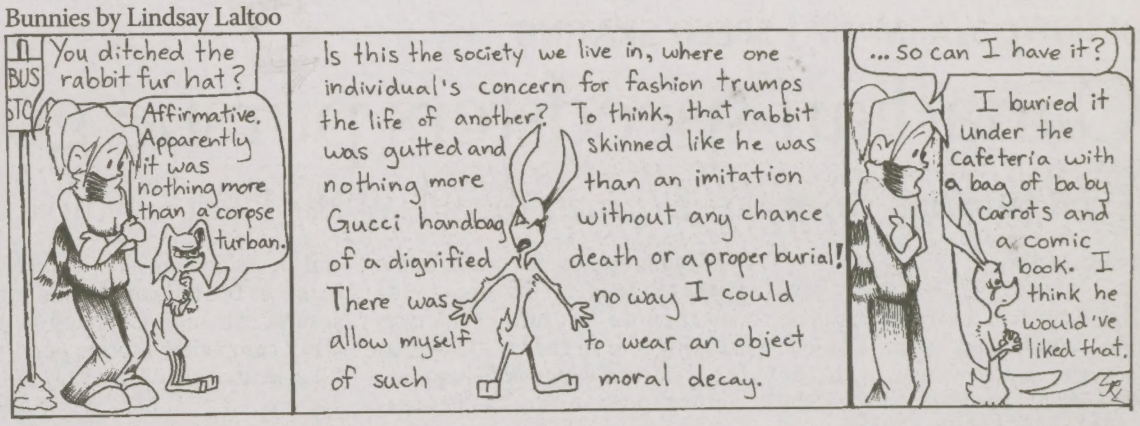
TREKKING IN TIBET: Join William Jans for a live multimedia adventure through Laos, Southern China and Mystical Tibet. Journeys on the roof of the world' include a pilgrimage around sacred Mount Kailash, and a trip up to 6500 meters on Mount EVEREST! "A one of a kind show - Jans is a hilarious storyteller and shows spectacular images" (Georgia Straight), "An absolute must see!" (Edmonton Journal), "Very insightful and provocative" (Ottawa Citizen).

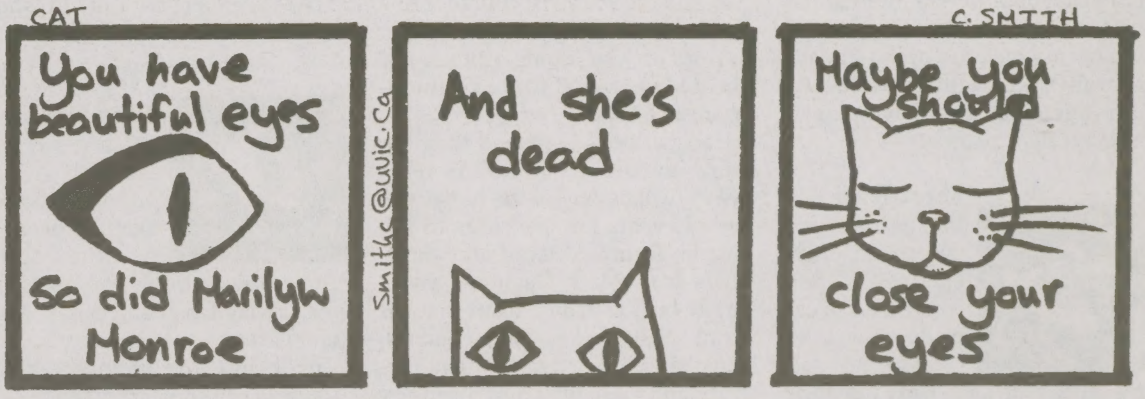
Gain teaching experience. Wild ARC wild animal rehabilitation centre in Victoria is seeking volunteers that can contribute to the development and delivery of education programs to local schools. Email info@wildarc.ca

Breastfeeding or pregnant and wanting to learn more? Looking for information or help? Wanting to meet other breastfeeding mothers? La Leche League Saanich/Gordon Head meets monthly. Our next meeting is on Wednesday February 8th at 10 A.M. This month's topic is "Realistic Expectations", but we are happy to discuss any topic related to breastfeeding. For location details call 479-6184.

SAM & FUZZY
©2006 BY SAM LOGAN
IS IT SO WRONG FOR A GUY TO LOOK FOR A LITTLE ADVICE ABOUT LIFE?
NEVER! AND THIS ADVICE IS SO APPLICABLE TO BOOB MAG'S READERSHIP, TOO!
"BOOB MAG, I AM A SUPER STUD. HOW CAN I GET CHICKS FOR A HOT XXX THREESOME?"
DEAR SUPER STUD: PERHAPS IF YOU GET OFF THE COMPUTER AND OUT OF MOM'S BASEMENT, YOU CAN ATTRACT A PAIR WITH YOUR VAST KNOWLEDGE OF DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.
GIGGLE!
...NOT ALL THE QUESTIONS ARE THAT BAD...
TRUST ME, SAM... THIS STUFF IS AWFUL. IT'S ALMOST AS USELESS AS THOSE RIDICULOUS SELF-HELP BOOKS.
...RIGHT. OF COURSE.
LATER...
SELF HELP
THE POWER OF YOU!
NEW COMICS EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT: WWW.SAMANDFUZZY.COM

Bunnies by Lindsay Laltoo


You ditched the rabbit fur hat?
BUS STOP
Affirmative. Apparently it was nothing more than a corpse turban.
Is this the society we live in, where one individual's concern for fashion trumps the life of another? To think, that rabbit was gutted and skinned like he was nothing more than an imitation Gucci handbag without any chance of a dignified death or a proper burial! There was no way I could allow myself to wear an object of such moral decay.
...so can I have it?
I buried it under the cafeteria with a bag of baby carrots and a comic book. I think he would've liked that.

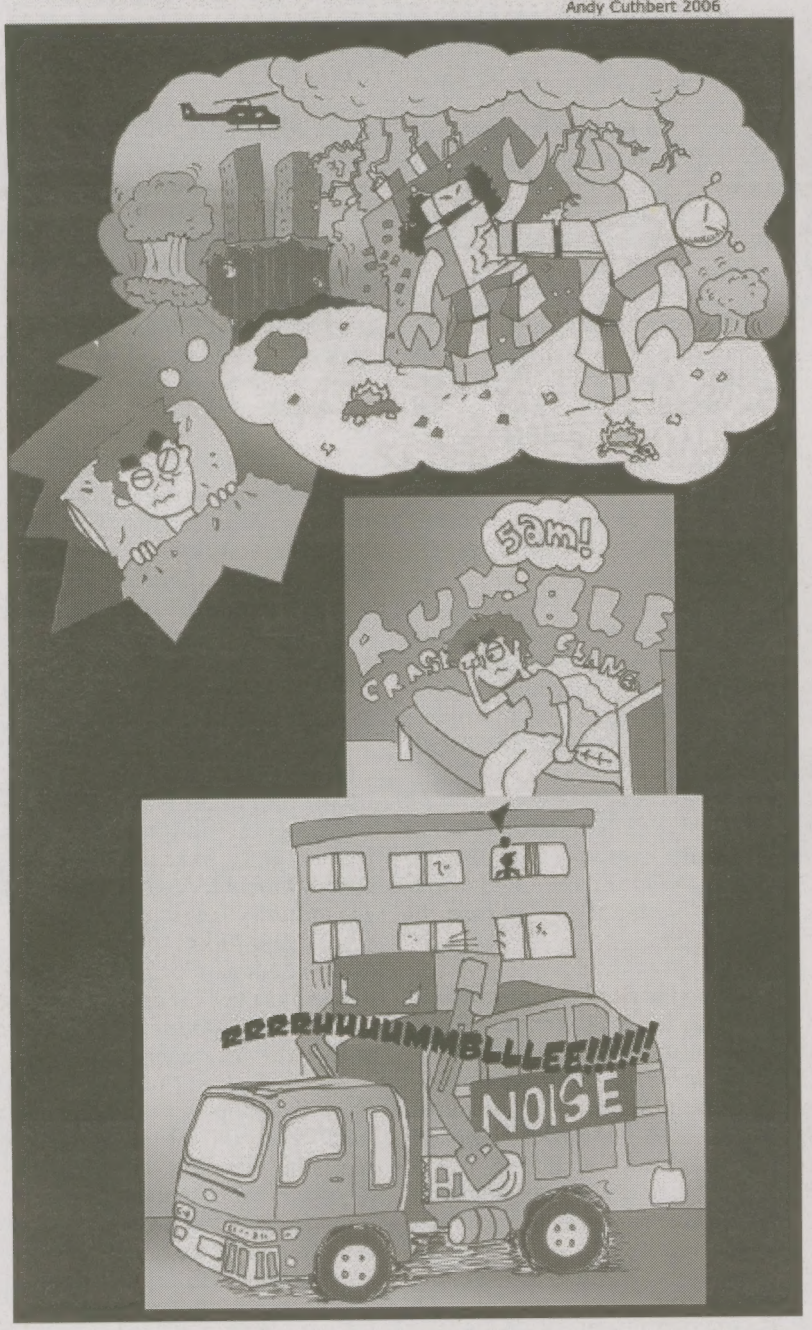


Anything interesting happen today?
Well, this guy came into the restaurant...
He must've been at least 6'10!
Did you ask him to leave?

DISCE PATI

AVERAGE STUDENT MAN C+

Andy Cuthbert 2006



GRADUATING THIS YEAR?

2006 GRAD CLASS
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

February 14th, 2006
12:30pm SUB
Room B110B

COFFEE AND SNACKS PROVIDED

- Check out plans for the Grad Party
- Have your say in the Grad Party and Legacy Project

YOUR YEAR
YOUR PARTY

For more information call 721-8370 or email chair@uvss.uvic.ca

How to gamble responsibly:

- Go with the right attitude: hope to win, expect to lose
- set your limits; both the amount of time and the amount of money should be predetermined
- be informed – know the rules and the odds of the games
- only bring cash with you to gamble, no debit or credit cards
- make gambling only part of an evening out, do other things
- go with friends, watch as well as play, and have fun!

South Island Problem Gambling Services

For free, confidential and professional counselling services call (250) 213-2353.
Online: w w w . s i p g s . c a